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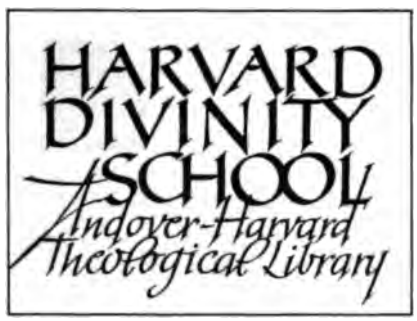
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MINUTES

OF THE

GENERAL CONFERENCE

OF THE

Congregational Churches in Massachusetts,

AT ITS FIRST ANNUAL SESSION,

HELD AT THE FIRST CHURCH IN SPRINGFIELD, SEPT. 11—13, 1860.

WITH THE

ESSAYS

WHICH WERE READ BEFORE THE CONFERENCE.

BOSTON:
CROCKER AND BREWSTER.
47 Washington Street.
1860.

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STATE LIBRARY

NOTICES.

The meeting of the Conference in 1861 will be held at Newburyport, commencing on Tuesday, the 10th of September, at 4 o'clock, P. M., and closing at 4 o'clock, P. M., of the Thursday following.

Rev. Mark Hopkins,* President of Williams College, is elected the Preacher of the opening Sermon.

The Andover Conference is to furnish the Preacher of the Sermon which is to be delivered before the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOME EVANGELIZATION, WHO ARE TO REPORT AT THE NEXT ANNUAL MEETING.

Rev. Henry M. Parsons, Springfield.
Rev. Christopher Cushing, North Brookfield.
Rev. Horace James, Worcester.
Bro. Nathan Allen, Lowell.
Dea. Andrew W. Porter, Monson.

OFFICERS.

Recording Secretary.

Rev. JOSHUA W. WELLMAN, Newton.

Statistical Secretary.

Rev. GEORGE MOOAR, Andover.

Treasurer.

Dea. WILLIAM HYDE, Ware.

Provisional Committee.

Rev. SAMUEL J. SPALDING, Newburyport.
Rev. ISRAEL E. DWINELL, Salem.
Rev. DANIEL TENNEY, Lawrence.
Bro. JOHN AIKEN, Andover.
Bro. RICHARD P. WATERS, Salem.

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*Honorary titles are omitted in these Minutes by direction of the Conference.

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MINUTES.

SPRINGFIELD, MASS., SEPT. 11, 1860.

Delegates chosen by several Local Conferences of the State, to constitute THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES IN MASSACHUSETTS, assembled at the First Church, at 4 o'clock, P. M. The meeting was called to order by the Junior Pastor of the Church, Rev. Henry M. Parsons.

Rev. Alonzo B. Rich of Beverly, was chosen Scribe *pro tem.*

Rev. Samuel J. Spalding of Newburyport, Rev. Jonas B. Clark of Swampscott, Rev. John C. Webster of Hopkinton, Bro. Allen W. Dodge of Hamilton, and Dea. Milton M. Fisher of Medway, were chosen a Committee on Credentials, who submitted a roll of members in three sections; first, those who received their credentials from Local Conferences; second, those who were appointed by Associations; and third, those who were sent by single churches.

Voted, To accept the report so far as the first two sections are concerned, it being understood, however, that hereafter delegates shall not be received from Associations, but only from Local Conferences.

ROLL OF DELEGATES CONSTITUTING THE GENERAL CONFERENCE.

Andover Conference:—

Rev. John P. Cleaveland, Lowell.
Rev. Daniel Tenney, Lawrence.
Bro. John Aiken, Andover.
Bro. H. M. B. Wightman, Lowell.
Bro. Nathan Allen, Lowell.

Barnstable Conference:—

Rev. Elisha Bacon, Centreville.

Berkshire South Conference :—

Rev. Nahum Gale, Lee.
Rev. Richard T. Searle, New Marlboro'.
Dea. Andrew Bacon, Egremont.
Dea. Gilbert Smith, Sheffield.
Dea. Albert D. Whitmore, Housatonic.

Brookfield Conference :—

Rev. Christopher Cushing, North Brookfield.
Bro. Bonum Nye, North Brookfield.
Dea. Cyril R. Brown, Brimfield.
Dea. William Hyde, Ware.

Essex North Conference :—

Rev. Leander Thompson, West Amesbury.
Rev. Samuel J. Spalding, Newburyport.
Dea. Daniel Adams, Newbury.
Bro. Richard Tenney, Georgetown.
Dea. Warren Ordway, Bradford.

Essex South Conference :—

Rev. Israel E. Dwinell, Salem.
Rev. Alonzo B. Rich, Beverly.
Bro. Allen W. Dodge, Hamilton.
Bro. Charles M. Richardson, Salem.

Franklin County Conference :—

Rev. George M. Adams, Conway.
Rev. Phineas C. Headley, Greenfield.

Hampden East Association :—

Rev. Joseph Vaill, Palmer.
Bro. Edward Ingersoll, Springfield.
Bro. Roderick Burt, Springfield.

Hampden West Association :—

Rev. Emerson Davis, Westfield.
Bro. Henry B. Smith, Westfield.
Bro. Edward Southworth, West Springfield.

Hampshire East Association :—

Rev. Henry B. Blake, Belchertown.
Rev. Rowland Ayres, Hadley.
Dea. Luke Sweetser, Amherst.

Mendon Conference :—

Rev. Samuel Hunt, Franklin.
Rev. Eber Carpenter, Southbridge.
Dea. Milton M. Fisher, Medway.
Dea. D. B. Rockwood, Milford.
Bro. Amos Johnson, Foxboro'.

Middlesex Union Conference :—

Rev. Edwin A. Bulkley, Groton.
Rev. Alfred Emerson, Fitchburg.

Middlesex South Conference :—

Rev. John C. Webster, Hopkinton.
Rev. Edmund Dowse, Sherburne.
Bro. Enos Hoyt, Framingham.
Bro. Alden Leland, Holliston.

Old Colony Conference :—

Rev. Sumner Clark, Rochester.
Rev. Wheelock Craig, New Bedford.
Bro. Nathan Briggs, Marion.
Bro. Reuben Nye, Fairhaven.

Salem Missionary Union :—

Rev. Jonas B. Clark, Swampscott.
Bro. Richard P. Waters, Salem.

Woburn Conference :—

Rev. Reuben T. Robinson, Winchester.
Dea. Stillman Parker, Reading.

Worcester Central Conference:—

Rev. Seth Sweetser, Worcester.
Rev. William P. Paine, Holden.
Bro. David Whitcomb, Worcester.
Bro. Joseph A. Denney, Leicester.
Bro. Charles L. Swan, Clinton.

Worcester North Conference:—

Rev. Lewis Sabin, Templeton.
Rev. Abijah P. Marvin, Winchendon.
Dea. William S. Bradbury, Westminster.
Dea. James I. Goulding, Athol.
Dea. Courtlon Sanderson, Phillipston.

Worcester South Conference:—

Rev. Edmund Y. Garrette, Millbury.
Dea. Elias T. Forbes, Millbury.
Bro. Simon J. Woodbury, Sutton.

Rev. Seth Sweetser of Worcester, was chosen Chairman, and the Conference adjourned to meet at 7½ o'clock in the evening.

Tuesday, 7½ o'clock, P. M. The Conference assembled at the appointed hour, to listen to the opening Sermon of the session. The devotional services were conducted by Rev. Aaron L. Chapin, President of Beloit College, Wisconsin. The Sermon was preached by Rev. William A. Stearns, President of Amherst College, from the following Scripture: "He is the head of the body, the Church." Coll. i: 18.

SECOND DAY.

Wednesday, Sept. 12. The Conference met at 9 o'clock, A. M., and spent an hour in devotional exercises, at the close of which Rev. Samuel G. Buckingham of Springfield, Rev. Joseph Vaill of Palmer, and Bro. Edward Ingersoll of Springfield were chosen a Committee of Arrangements.

An Essay was then read by Rev. Israel E. Dwinell of Salem, upon the following subject: "The importance of Christian Fellowship amongst the churches."* After the reading of the Essay, the Conference took

*See Essay No. 1.

up the subject for discussion. Upon recommendation by the Committee of Arrangements, voted that the speakers be limited to seven minutes; also, that one half hour of the afternoon session be given to Rev. Cyrus Hamlin of Constantinople. The discussion was continued until the hour assigned for business, when the Committee of Arrangements reported the following resolution, which they proposed to lay upon the table for future action:

Resolved, That, in view of the spiritual desolations, which are known to exist in this Commonwealth, and the fact that so large a portion of our population are not reached, at present, by the ordinary means of grace,—a Committee of five be appointed by this Conference, to consider and report next year, what can be done to reach more effectually these masses, and more thoroughly evangelize every portion of our Commonwealth.

ORGANIZATION OF THE CONFERENCE.

The hour having arrived for the formal organization of the Conference, a Constitution, which had been previously prepared and submitted to the churches for examination, was taken up and read, and after being slightly amended was unanimously adopted.

The proposed By-Laws were also considered, and after a verbal amendment was made, were unanimously adopted.

CONSTITUTION.

1. This body shall be called the GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES IN MASSACHUSETTS.

2. The object of this Conference is to secure Christian union, fellowship and intercourse among the churches; to promote spirituality; incite to a more elevated piety, and stimulate Christians to greater activity and efficiency in advancing the Redeemer's kingdom.

3. This Conference shall, under no circumstances, exercise ecclesiastical authority, or interfere with the government or discipline of the churches, or consent to hear appeals, or give advice in ecclesiastical causes of any kind.

4. Each local Conference, composed of evangelical Congregational Churches within the State, may appoint five delegates to attend the annual meeting of the Conference, two of whom shall be pastors of churches, and three lay members.

5. The officers of the Conference shall be a Moderator, a Recording Secretary, a Statistical Secretary, and a Treasurer.

6. The Moderator shall be chosen by ballot from among the delegates present, and shall preside during the meeting for which he is chosen.

7. The Secretaries and Treasurer shall be chosen by ballot, and continue in office three years.

8. The Recording Secretary shall keep a fair record of the doings of each meeting, in a book to be kept for that purpose, which shall be transmitted to his successor in office.

9. The Statistical Secretary shall collect and arrange such statistics as the Conference may order; shall distribute all documents received for the use of the Conference, or printed by them, and shall preserve a copy of all the publications of the Conference.

10. The Treasurer shall receive all money raised for the use of the Conference; disburse the same as directed, and present an annual report, audited as the Conference may direct.

11. Any ordained pastor or member of a Congregational Church within the bounds of the State, shall be eligible to the offices of Secretary, Statistical Secretary and Treasurer.

12. The Conference may receive delegates from other State evangelical religious bodies, representing Congregational Churches, who shall be considered honorary members, and be admitted to the privilege of participating in the deliberations of the meeting, but shall not be allowed to vote; and the Conference may reciprocate the courtesy by appointing delegates to such bodies.

13. Twenty-five regularly appointed delegates shall constitute a quorum.

14. The Conference shall hold an annual meeting on the second Tuesday in September, at such place as shall be designated, to commence at four o'clock, or other more convenient hour, in the afternoon, and to close at four o'clock in the afternoon of the Thursday following.

15. A sermon shall be preached on the evening of the first day of the meeting, and another, adapted to the occasion, on the afternoon of the last day, to be followed by the Lord's Supper, to be administered generally without remarks.

16. Brief narratives of the state of religion within the bounds of local Conferences, shall be presented in writing to a Committee appointed to receive them, which shall be embodied in a report and read by the Committee, at such time as the Conference may appoint.

17. Other services of the Conference shall consist of devotional exercises, addresses and discussions upon subjects of practical religious interest, together with the objects of benevolent enterprise, sustained by the churches, to be provided for, and arranged as shall be laid down in the By-Laws.

18. The Conference shall establish By-Laws and Rules of Order for the regulation of its business, which shall be adopted by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any annual meeting.

19. Any proposition to alter or amend a By-Law shall be made at the annual meeting previous to the one at which it is acted upon.

20. Any article of this Constitution may be altered or amended by a two-thirds vote, at any annual meeting, provided, that the proposition is made at any previous annual meeting, excepting that *article third* shall be held unalterable.

BY-LAWS.

1. At the appointed hour of meeting, the Pastor of the Church where the meeting is held shall call to order; the certificates of delegates shall be immediately presented to the Recording Secretary, and a quorum being declared present, a Moderator shall be chosen.

2. The Moderator shall open the meeting with devotional exercises, and at the opening of each subsequent session, shall appoint some person to offer prayer.

3. A committee of three shall be appointed to act as a Committee of Arrangements.

4. At each meeting, a Provisional Committee of five persons, shall be appointed to arrange the schedule for the subsequent meeting; to designate the place, and to nominate a preacher, for the opening sermon.

5. The preacher of the sermon before the communion, shall be chosen by the local conferences, in alphabetical order.

6. In order to separate the business from the religious services, special times shall be designated, at which all business of the Conference shall be transacted.

7. Whenever it shall appear to the Committee appointed to embody the narratives of the state of religion, that the religious condition within any local Conferences justifies a more detailed recital, a delegate from every such Conference may make verbal statements to the meeting, under the direction of the Committee.

8. The Conference shall determine, by vote, what objects of Christian benevolence may from time to time be presented, and the particular objects to be presented at any meeting, shall be determined by the Provisional Committee.

9. The Constitution and By-Laws shall be read near the opening of the session, on the second day.

10. When a report is made, the question shall be, "Shall the report be accepted?" If resolutions are appended, the question may be divided at the request of any member, and the vote taken separately on accepting the report, and on accepting the resolutions.

11. The motion for "the previous question," shall be put without debate, and if carried, the main question shall be immediately put.

12. The Conference shall observe the usual rules of order in deliberative bodies, in all cases where it has no special rule of its own.

13. Before adjournment, the minutes of the meeting shall be read for approval.

Voted, That Rev. Samuel J. Spalding, Rev. John P. Cleaveland, Rev. Emerson Davis, Bro. John Aiken, and Dea. Daniel Adams, be a Committee on Nominations.

The Conference then adjourned to meet again at 2½ o'clock, P. M.

Wednesday afternoon. At 2½ o'clock the Conference reassembled, and spent one hour in devotional exercises, which were directed by Rev. William P. Paine of Holden.

An Essay was then read by Rev. Ebenezer Cutler of Worcester, upon the following subject: "The Relation of Secret and Family Prayer to Christian Progress."* The subject was taken up and discussed by the Conference until 4½ o'clock, the hour assigned to Rev. Cyrus Hamlin of Constantinople, who addressed the Conference.

The Committee on Nominations then reported, recommending a list of officers for the Conference. The report was accepted, and the following officers were unanimously elected.

OFFICERS OF THE CONFERENCE.

Moderator, Rev. Seth Sweetser of Worcester; Recording Secretary, Rev. Joshua W. Wellman of Newton; Statistical Secretary, Rev. George Mooar of Andover; Treasurer, Dea. William Hyde of Ware.

The third section of the report of the Committee on Credentials was taken from the table, and it was

Voted, That it gives us pleasure to welcome the Pastors and Church Members sent to the Conference by individual churches, and that such individuals be cordially received to the full extent allowed by our duty to the churches, and that this shall not be deemed a precedent for the future action of this body.

The following are the delegates who were sent by individual churches:

Union Church, Boston:—

Dea. Charles Scudder, Bro. Francis D. Stedman.

Church in Seekonk:—

Rev. James O. Barney.

First Church, Longmeadow:—

Rev. John W. Harding, Bro. W. G. Goldthwait,
Bro. Sanford Lawton, Dea. C. B. Brown.

Second Church, Greenfield:—

Bro. Ansel Phelps.

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*See Essay No. 2.

First Church, Middleboro':—

Dea. Nathaniel Eddy, Bro. George M. Leach.

Voted, That the Chair nominate the Provisional Committee, required by Article 4th of the By-Laws.

The Conference then adjourned, to meet in the evening.

Wednesday evening. Conference met at 7½ o'clock. The session was opened by devotional services.

Upon nomination by the Chair, the following brethren were appointed a Provisional Committee:

Rev. Samuel J. Spalding, Bro. John Aiken,
Rev. Israel E. Dwinell, Bro. Richard P. Waters.
Rev. Daniel Tenney,

The discussion of the evening was opened by an Essay from Rev. Richard B. Thurston of Waltham, upon the following subject: "The Christian use of Property."*

A fraternal letter was received from Rev. K. A. Burnell, in behalf of a Committee of the Congregational State Conference of Wisconsin. After the reading of which, a telegraphic dispatch was received from that Conference in session at Watertown, expressing their Christian salutations in passages of Scripture. By vote, the Committee of Arrangements were requested to reply to those salutations by telegraph.

TELEGRAPHIC DISPATCHES.

From the Conference of Wisconsin to the Conference of Massachusetts.

"Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and of the Lord Jesus Christ." 2d Thess. i: 11, 12.

"Therefore, they, that were scattered abroad, went every where preaching the word." Acts viii: 4.

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God; and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my new name." Rev. iii: 12.

K. A. BURNELL, *for the Conference of Wisconsin.*

*See Essay No. 3.

From the Conference of Massachusetts to the Conference of Wisconsin.

"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." 3 John, 4.

"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you. To the end he may stablish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." 1st Thess. iii: 12, 13.

JOSEPH VAILL, *for the Conference of Massachusetts.*

Voted, To adjourn.

THIRD DAY.

Thursday morning. The Conference assembled at 9 o'clock, and spent an hour in devotional exercises.

An Essay was then read by Rev. Nahum Gale of Lee, upon the following subject: "The duty of Church Members to engage in the active service of Christ in their several callings."* The subject was discussed at length and with great interest by the Conference.

The resolution on home evangelization was then taken from the table, and referred to a Committee, to be reported upon next year. The following brethren were appointed this Committee:

Rev. Henry M. Parsons, Springfield;
Rev. Christopher Cushing, North Brookfield;
Rev. Horace James, Worcester;
Bro. Nathan Allen, Lowell;
Dea. Andrew W. Porter, Monson.

A collection taken to defray the expenses incident to the organization of the Conference amounted to $56.

Voted, To print the four Essays read at the present session, and also the minutes of the Conference.

Voted, That Rev. Joshua W. Wellman of Newton, Rev. Samuel J. Spalding of Newburyport, and Bro. Allen W. Dodge of Hamilton, be a Publishing Committee; and that the Publishing Committee have discretionary power in determining how much of each Essay shall be published.

Upon recommendation by the Provisional Committee,

Voted, That Newburyport be the place for the next annual meeting of the Conference; that Rev. Mark Hopkins, President of Williams College, be in-

*See Essay No. 4.

vited to preach the opening Sermon, and that the preacher of the Sermon before the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper be appointed by the Andover Conference.

Upon motion by Bro. Nathan Allen of Lowell,

Resolved, That as delegates and members of the churches connected with the Congregational denomination in Massachusetts, having enjoyed the liberal hospitalities of the families of Springfield, we would tender them our sincere thanks for their generous entertainment and friendly intercourse, which, so kindly and heartily expressed, will long be remembered as true exhibitions of Christian fellowship.

Voted, That the thanks of the Conference be tendered to those Railroad Officers who have furnished facilities for attending the present meeting of the Conference.

Voted, That after the observance of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the afternoon, the Conference adjourn, *sine die.*

Voted, To adjourn.

Thursday, P. M. The Conference reassembled at 2½ o'clock, to observe the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The devotional services in connection with the sermon were conducted by Rev. Zachary Eddy of Northampton. The sermon was preached by Rev. Eli Thurston of Fall River, and was founded upon the Scripture: "What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?" John xi: 56. The services at the Lord's Table were conducted by Rev. Justin Perkins of the Nestorian Mission, and Rev. Wheelock Craig of New Bedford; and the benediction was pronounced by the venerable Senior Pastor of the First Church in Springfield, Rev. Samuel Osgood.

In accordance with a previous vote the Conference was then adjourned, *sine die.*

SETH SWEETSER, *Moderator.*

JOSHUA W. WELLMAN, *Recording Secretary.*

A true copy of the Minutes.

Attest, JOSHUA W. WELLMAN.

LOCAL CONFERENCES.

The following, it is believed, is a complete list of the Local Conferences of the State, and is inserted simply as a matter of information. These Conferences, composed of Pastors and Delegates of Churches, meet simply for religious services and conference. They are not ecclesiastical bodies, and they exercise no ecclesiastical power whatever.

ANDOVER CONFERENCE. Organized at Lowell, June 8, 1859. Churches, 19. Church members, 4,376.

Andover, South ch.
" Theol. Sem. ch.
" West ch.
" Free ch.
" Ballardvale,
Chelmsford, North ch.
Dracut, First ch.
" West ch.
" Central ch.
Lawrence, Lawrence-st. ch.
" Central ch.
Lowell, First ch.
" Appleton-st. ch.
" John-st. ch.
" Kirk-st. ch.
" High-st. ch.
Methuen, First Cong ch.
North Andover, Evan. ch.
Tewksbury.

Time of meeting, "the second Wednesday and the following Thursday of June." "A meeting of one day's continuance may also be held in the Autumn of each year, at such time and place as may be agreed upon at the June meeting." Scribe, Rev. George Mooar, Andover.

BARNSTABLE CONFERENCE. Organized Oct. 28, 1828. Churches, 27. Church members, 2,507.

Barnstable, Hyannis,
" West,
" Cotuit,
" Centreville,
Chatham,
Chilmark,
Dennis, South,
Eastham,
Falmouth, First ch.
" East,
" North,
" East, 2d ch.
Harwich,
Harwich Port, Pilgrim ch.
Orleans, East,
Provincetown.

Sandwich.
" Monument,
" Puritan ch.
Tisbury, First sch.
" Holmes Hole.
Truro, First ch.
" North.
Wellfleet, First ch.
" South.
Yarmouth.
" West.

Times of meeting, "second Tuesday in June, and the Tuesday in December next preceding the full moon." Scribe, Rev. Frederick Hebard, Harwich Port.

BERKSHIRE SOUTH CONFERENCE. Organized at Lee, Sept. 4, 1860. Churches, 11. Church members, 1,665.

Egremont,
Housatonic,
Lee,
Lenox,
Monterey,
New Marlboro',
Otis,
Sheffield,
Southfield,
Stockbridge,
West Stockbridge Centre.

Time of meeting, second Wednesday in November. Scribe to be chosen at the next meeting.

BROOKFIELD ASSOCIATIONAL CONFERENCE. Organized June 10, 1838. Churches, 18. Church members, 2,835.

Brimfield,
Brookfield,
Charlton,
Dana Centre,
Dudley,
Hardwick,
Holland,
New Braintree,
North Brookfield, 1st ch.
" Union ch.
Oakham,
Southbridge,
Spencer,
Sturbridge,
Ware, 1st ch.
" East ch.
Warren,
West Brookfield.

Time of meeting, second Tuesday in June; meeting for Bible and Missionary causes, the Tuesday after the third Wednesday in October. Scribe, Rev. A. E. P. Perkins, Ware.

ESSEX NORTH CONFERENCE. Organized April 30, 1828. Churches, 23. Church members, 3,810.

Amesbury, West,
" Mills,
" and Salisbury,
Boxford, West,
Bradford,
Georgetown,
Groveland,

Haverhill, West,
" East,
" Centre,
" North Cong. ch.
Ipswich, First ch.
" Linebrook,
Newbury, First ch.
" Byfield,
Newburyport, North,
" Fourth ch.
" Whitfield ch.
" Bellville,
Rowley,
Salisbury, Hill,
West Newbury, First ch.
" Second ch.

Time of meeting, the first week in October. Benevolent Societies are represented. Scribe, Rev. John R. Thurston, Newbury.

ESSEX SOUTH CONFERENCE. Organized May 8, 1827. Churches, 18. Church members, 3,250.

Beverly, Dane-st. ch.
" Washington-st. ch.
Danvers, Maple-st. ch.
Essex,
Gloucester, West,
" Harbor,
" Lanesville,
Hamilton,
Ipswich, South ch.
Lynnfield Centre,
Manchester, two churches,
Middleton,
Rockport, First ch.
" Second ch.
Salem, Third ch.
" Howard-st. ch.
South Danvers.

Times of meeting, second Wednesdays in June and October. Scribe, Rev. George E. Freeman, Manchester.

FRANKLIN COUNTY CONFERENCE AND BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION. Organized Sept. 1860. Churches, 26. Church members, 2,976.

Ashfield, First ch.
" Second ch.
Bernardston,
Buckland,
Charlemont, First ch.
" East,
Colerain,
Conway,
Deerfield, Orthodox ch.
" South, First ch.
" " Monument ch.
Erving,
Gill,
Greenfield, First ch.
" Second ch.
Hawley, East,
" West,
Heath,
Montague,
Northfield,
Orange,
Shelburne,
" Falls,
Shutesbury,
Sunderland,
Wendell.

Time of meeting, the Tuesday preceding the third Wednesday in September. Scribe, Rev. David A. Strong, South Deerfield.

HAMPDEN CONFERENCE. First meeting Dec. 4, 1850. Churches, 34 Church members, 4,800.

Agawam,
" Feeding Hills,
Blandford,
Chester,
" Factories,
Chicopee, First ch.
" Second ch.
" Third ch.
Granville, East,
" West,
Holyoke, First ch.
" Second ch.
Huntington, Second ch.
Longmeadow,
" East,
Ludlow,
Monson,
Montgomery,
Palmer, First ch.
" Second ch.
South Hadley Falls,
Springfield, First ch.
" Olivet,
" South,
" North,
" Indian Orchard,
Southwick,
Tolland,
Westfield, First ch.
" Second ch.
West Springfield,
" Mettineague,
Wilbraham,
" South.

This Conference has "no constitution, no permanent officers;" "it originated in an invitation of"—"church to the other churches of the County to meet with us, to become better acquainted with each other's condition, to make such suggestions to one another as shall be mutually beneficial, and to engage together in devotional services." Time of meeting, on or about the first Tuesday in October, as any Church, choosing to invite, may decide. Rev. Samuel G. Buckingham of Springfield, acts as Scribe.

MENDON CONFERENCE. Organized April 27, 1858. Churches, 12. Church members, 1,800.

Foxboro',
Franklin, First ch.
" South ch.
Mansfield,
Medfield,
Medway, East,
Medway, Village,
" West,
Milford,
Walpole,
Wrentham, Original,
" North.

Times of meeting, semi-annual, "on the Tuesdays and Wednesdays of such weeks in April and October as shall be designated by the Committee of Arrangements." Scribe, Rev. Samuel Hunt, Franklin.

MIDDLESEX UNION CONFERENCE. Organized May, 1839. Churches, 15. Church members, 2,493.

Acton,
Ashby,
Boxboro',
Dunstable,

Fitchburg, Calv. ch.
Groton,
Harvard,
Lancaster,
Leominster,
Littleton,
Lunenburg,
Pepperill,
Shirley,
Townsend,
Westford.

Time of meeting, "the third Wednesday and Thursday of October." Benevolent Societies are represented. Scribe, Rev. Elihu Loomis, Littleton.

NORFOLK CONFERENCE. Organized June 14, 1827. Churches, 33. Church members, 4,047.

Abington, First ch.
" Second ch.
" Third ch.
" Fourth ch.
Braintree, First ch.
" South,
" and Weymouth, Union. ch.
Bridgewater, Trinitarian ch.
Canton,
Cohasset,
Dorchester, Second ch.
" Village ch.
E. and W. Bridgewater, Un. ch.
East Bridgewater, Trin. ch.
Easton,
Hingham,
Milton, First ch.
" Second Evang. ch.
North Bridgewater, First ch.
" South Cong. ch.
" Porter Ev. ch.
Quincy,
Randolph, First ch.
" East ch.
" Winthrop ch.
Sharon,
Stoughton,
Weymouth, First ch.
" Second ch.
" Union ch.
" Pilgrim ch.
" East Cong. ch.

Times of meeting, first Tuesday in May and last Tuesday in September. Scribe, Rev. Frederick R. Abbe, Abington.

OLD COLONY CONFERENCE. Organized September 23, 1856. Churches, 12. Church members, 1,988.

Fairhaven,
Marion,
Mattapoisett,
Middleboro', First,
" Central,
New Bedford, First ch.
New Bedford, North ch.
" Trinitarian ch.
" Pacific ch.
Rochester Centre,
South Dartmouth,
Wareham.

Times of meeting, last Tuesdays in April and October. Clerk, Rev. John Willard, Fairhaven.

PILGRIM CONFERENCE. Organized April 27, 1830. Churches, 13. Church members, 1,017.

Carver,	Marshfield, First ch.
Halifax,	" East, 2d Trin. ch.
Hanson,	Plymouth, Second ch.
Hanover, First ch.	" Third ch.
" Second ch.	" Fourth ch.
Kingston,	Plympton,
	Scituate.

Times of meeting, third Tuesdays in April and October. Scribe, Rev. Timothy G. Brainerd, Halifax.

SALEM MISSIONARY UNION. Organized June 11, 1851. Churches, 11. Church members, 1,803.

Boxford, First ch.	Salem, Tabernacle ch.
Danvers, First ch.	Saugus, First ch.
Lynn, First ch.	Swampscott, 1st ch.
" Central ch.	Topsfield,
Lynnfield, Second ch.	Wenham, Cong. ch.
Marblehead,	

"The Salem Missionary Union is a body composed, according to the second article of its Constitution, 'of the Salem Association of Congregational Ministers, and members of the Churches connected with the Association.' It is a body therefore of constant members, male and female, and is formed to serve both as a Conference of Churches and a Missionary Society. It takes care of its own feeble churches." Time of meeting, second Wednesday in June. Scribe, Rev. Jotham B. Sewall, Lynn.

SOUTH MIDDLESEX CONFERENCE. Organized Aug. 20, 1828. Churches, 18. Church members, 2,465.

Assabet, in Stowe,	Marlboro',
Ashland,	Natick,
Concord,	Saxonville,
Dover,	Sherborn,
Framingham,	Southboro',
Grantville,	South Natick,
Holliston,	Sudbury,
Hopkinton,	Wayland,
Lincoln,	West Needham.

Times of meeting, third Tuesdays in April and October. Scribe, Rev. Elnathan E. Strong, South Natick.

TAUNTON AND VICINITY. Organized Nov. 7, 1848. Churches, 15. Church members, 2,417.

Attleboro', First ch.
" Second ch.
Berkley, First ch.
" Trin. Cong. ch.
Dighton,
Fall River, Central ch.
Freetown, Assonet,
Norton,
Pawtucket,
Raynham,
Rehoboth,
Seekonk,
Taunton, Trin. Cong. ch.
" Winslow ch.
" East Cong. ch.

Times of meeting, the last Tuesday in September, or the first Tuesday in October,—being the first Tuesday after the meeting of the Bristol County Agricultural Society. Scribe, Rev. Robert Carver, Taunton.

WOBURN CONFERENCE. Organized Dec. 5, 4849. Churches, 17. Church members, 2,503.

Bedford,
Billerica,
Burlington,
Caslisle,
Medford, Trin. ch.
" Mystic ch.
Melrose,
North Reading,
Reading, Bethesda ch.
South Reading,
Stoneham,
Waltham,
West Cambridge,
Wilmington,
Winchester,
Woburn, First ch.
" North ch.

Times of meeting, last Tuesdays in April and October. Scribe, Rev. Reuben T. Robinson, Winchester.

WORCESTER CENTRAL CONFERENCE. Organized April 28, 1852. Churches, 19. Church members, 4,393.

Auburn,
Barre, Ev. Cong. ch.
Berlin, First ch.
Boylston,
Clinton,
Holden,
Leicester,
Northboro',
Oxford,
Paxton,
Princeton,
Rutland,
Shrewsbury,
Sterling,
West Boylston, First Cong. ch.
Worcester, First Parish,
" Calvinistic,
" Union,
" Salem-st.

Times of meeting, the Wednesday following the third Monday in April and the Wednesday following the third Monday in October. "Education and Bible, and Foreign Missionary Societies represented in October." Tract, Sabbath School, and Home Mission causes represented in April. Scribe, Rev. Warren W. Winchester, Clinton.

WORCESTER NORTH CONFERENCE. Organized Nov. 14, 1827. Churches, 14. Church members, 2,099.

Ashburnham,	Phillipston,
" North,	Royalston, First ch.
Athol,	" Second ch.
Gardner, First ch.	Templeton,
" Evan. ch.	Westminster,
Hubbardston,	Winchendon, First ch.
Petersham,	" North ch.

"Time of meeting, second Tuesday in June. The Tract, Bible, Seamen's Friend, and Home Missionary Societies, are represented on Tuesday. The Sabbath School Society on Wednesday morning. The Foreign Missionary and Education Societies hold a meeting by themselves on the Thursday after the third Monday in October." Clerk of the Conference, Rev. John C. Paine, Gardner.

WORCESTER SOUTH CONFERENCE. Organized June 1828. Churches, 14. Church members, 2,380.

Blackstone,	Northbridge, First ch.
Douglas, First ch.	" Whitinsville,
" East,	Sutton,
Grafton,	Upton,
" Saundersville,	Uxbridge,
Millbury, First ch.	Webster,
" Second ch.	Westboro'.

Times of meeting, fourth Tuesdays in April and October. Benevolent Societies heard at each session. Scribe, Rev. George Lyman, Sutton.

Number of Local Conferences, ...	20
Number of Churches included in these Conferences, .	369
Number of Church Members, ...	55,624

ESSAY.—No. 1.

BY REV. ISRAEL E. DWINELL, SALEM.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP AMONG THE CHURCHES.

Christian fellowship implies three things: acquaintance, sympathy, and intercourse, or the interchange of Christian courtesies, among Christians. Neither can be wanting. There must be acquaintance; else the sympathy will only be like that for remote and unknown persons, and the intercourse like that of those coöperating in a secular organization. There must be sympathy; else the acquaintance and intercourse will be external and formal merely, without internal and spiritual bonds. And there must be intercourse; else the acquaintance and sympathy will be unorganized and chaotic—the fellowship in possibility, not in reality. The three in vital union are fellowship; and the presence of the three, thus animating our churches, produces Christian fellowship among them.

Christian fellowship in our churches is, therefore, a method of fraternizing which issues directly from a spiritual source, from the recognition of a common religious experience and life, and is independent of ecclesiastical control or organization. Its boundaries are determined by spiritual facts, not by ecclesiastical limits or resolves; and its life may be nourished without running into ecclesiasticism—alike without ecclesiastical suggestion or guidance, and ecclesiastical tendencies or results.

The ground of Christian fellowship is *common union with Christ*, and this shows its importance. There is nothing else in the universe that constitutes so strong a reason and so weighty a bond for union. It brings together those possessing it in one spiritual brotherhood, which will outlive the unions formed on all other associative principles. The strongest combining powers of earth, which draw human beings together, sending the pulsings of one heart through them, and the determinations of one will along their actions, are insignificant in comparison with it. It is a timeless and undying principle, and brings all those in whom it

works into a timeless and undying fraternity, widely separated in destiny and bliss from all other members of the human race. The family tie is nothing beside it; so is the love of society; so is the party rallying-cry; so is the kindling power of the popular orator or hero; and so is the social and political principle which integrates society itself. For the associations and intimacies founded on these things will pass away as with a breath; but those who are united with Christ will live and be one together forever.

Now, recognizing in one another this union, our churches should begin to act on it in time. Members already of a spiritual fraternity more durable and valuable than any or all others that can be conceived of, why ought we not to look beneath the surface, live in accordance with the grand spiritual reality, and recognize in one another, now, our future and immortal fellows? Why should not these hearts beat together now, and these hands join and cleave together, which are to be in loving unison when the attractions of the heavenly orbs shall cease, and all merely earthly relationships be no more?

Starting from this broad and universal ground, *our relationship to one another* affords a specific reason for fellowship. We are related as *kindred*, in polity, ritual, doctrine, practice, locality. Providence has placed us within these common external folds, and says to us, through them, as plainly as words could say it: Know and love one another. We are, denominationally, one; and are embowered, under the same general, local and circumstantial influences, within reach of each other; and we sin against Providence, when we ignore this relationship, and refuse to take those in our embrace, whom it has thus made one with us. It is the sin of sisters settled close around the old homestead, refusing to be neighborly and kindly and loving to one another.

Again, *fidelity to our historical position* enforces this duty. We are the descendants of a peculiar but noble body of Christians. We stand in the Puritan line; and the tide of living influence perpetuated through men, which they give to the world, is sent down preëminently through us. And there is need still of the peculiar influence we have thus inherited, and which it is our mission to continue to send abroad. The three great ideas, which have thus come down to us, linger around our ranks, and pass on, are these: first, *equality of Christians*;—our system exalting the individual in relation to his fellow Christians, and putting him on an ecclesiastical level with the highest,—being, hence, radically opposed to all those systems in which the hierarchical idea exists. Second, *loyalty to Scripture*;—our faith subordinating the individual reason and conscience, in their highest activity and culture, to the

authority of the Bible, without suppression or preference; thus being radically unlike the temper of those which subject revelation to reason, or the creed, or the teachings of the Church, or tradition, or which make their own existence hinge on some speciality of rite or doctrine supposed to be taught in revelation. And third, *direct and sole responsibility of each Church to Christ*:—our polity permitting the individual Church to acknowledge no other higher head,—being, accordingly, essentially different from those in which the denomination absorbes the Church, or exercises authority over it. Now the maintenance of these ideas—which penetrate indeed, in parts and modifications, other denominations, and to that extent are wrought out in turn by them, but which are the marked characteristics of our own, its denominational life's blood—is essential to the welfare of Christ's kingdom. They in fact lie at the foundation of the ideal and perfect state of piety,—the development of the highest individuality in man mingled with the highest subjection to Christ. They also furnish the spiritual life, the most vital of any, of the great Republican ideas of the freedom and equality of man and obedience to authority. Our system is thus both historically and actually vitally interlocked with the spiritual frame-work—the frame-work of ideas, the strongest of all—of our Republic. Liberty and loyalty, the two principles essential to the welfare or continued existence of free institutions, cannot afford to lose the quickening supplies which flow into them from New England Congregationalism. For this would be to cut off one of the great sources of their spiritual life; and the spiritual life gone, the moral would speedily die; and the moral dying, the political would soon follow, and our Republican experiment be no more.

Our mission, therefore, is still fresh and young. But to fulfil it, we need to multiply and strengthen the hands of fraternity. We need to gather around and foster our characteristic ideas, while at the same time gathering around and fostering the broad spirit which unites us to Christ and to all Christians. Our fathers by their circumstances—their wilderness-life, isolation, the hazard and daring of their new enterprise, the common hard struggles, civil and ecclesiastical, through which they passed—were drawn together in close fellowship. Without outward cords, they naturally grew together,—a peculiarly strong, hardy, heroic, pure class of Christians. We, on the other hand, are surrounded, and crossed and re-crossed, by other ideas new and old, and by other polities. All systems lie around and among us with their modulating influence; and there is not even, we rejoice to say, the expulsive and self-concentrating influence of warfare between us and them. They are recognized and welcomed as honored and honorable parts of the great

force of Christ, having their own peculiar mission to perform. But it is plain, that, while the circumstances of our fathers promoted fellowship, ours oppose it. Hence the necessity of special efforts, if we would perpetuate the indispensable influence which we have inherited. If we do not know and sympathize with and encourage one another, when all other denominations are strengthening their cords and planting them among us, we shall be unfaithful to our high trust, and deprive Christ and our country of the blessing. The relative position of our system is insignificant now in comparison with former times; and nothing can keep us and the great causes of Christianity and freedom from suffering farther, unless we arise to mutual support and encouragement; and this involves fellowship.

Further, fellowship is desirable as *a means of developing our energies.* Intercourse with others, under a state of things in which work is the law and laziness discreditable, powerfully arouses human effort; isolation paralyzes it. Show a fearless man a battle, and from the attraction of sheer sympathy with the stirring scene, he will want to throw himself into it. Hence any thing which shall draw onr churches into greater loving intimacy will, by this law of mutual stimulation, greatly arouse their zeal, and increase their efficiency. A church standing apart by itself is not half a church, even in its own field; a church firing others, and in turn fired by them, by the consciousness of being, and of being seen to be, in the mighty battle of work for Christ, is a hundred times a church—in its own field, and everywhere else. Now our churches are suffering from just this stagnation. There is in them an immense reserve of undeveloped power, which ought to he occupied. We have fallen into the ruts; and as farmers, mechanics, and the friends of Sabbath Schools and Missions meet together to arouse their zeal by methods of fellowship, so do we need to do the same, and for the same reason. There is not a church in the Commonwealth that would not do incomparably more, if it were where, from time to time, it should see and feel the stimulus of other working churches. In such a church, the faithful and self-sacrificing would do more, and that more easily; the timid become bold; the sluggish active; and the slumbering awake out of sleep. In such a hive, no drones could breed.

But fellowship is necessary not only to develope our energies, but also *to harmonize and wisely distribute them.* Each of our churches is a member of a spiritual whole, and only finds its true value in its harmonious coöperative relation to that whole; just as each denomination is a part of a larger whole, the present body of Christ; and each dispensation, of a still larger whole, the kingdom of Christ on earth. But

without fellowship among our churches, their working energies cannot harmonize, cannot be smoothly articulated together, but must come in frequent collision, or overlap; and thus either waste or wreck of effort be the consequence. Here is this whole great field to be occupied,—a certain work which we as a denomination ought to do—a denominational work, if you please, not however for the denomination, but Christ. Here are many weak churches which need the help of intercourse with the strong; and many strong ones which quite as much need that of intercourse with the weak. Here too are waste places—old occupations now desolate, and virgin fields—demanding our industry. This complicated and outreaching service cannot be performed without inconceivable waste and delay by the guerrilla attacks of separate churches; nor can it be safely entrusted to voluntary outside bodies. It should be done by us with harmonious, economized, greatly increased strength and resources. But this implies acquaintance, concert, fraternal intimacy and coöperation; and this is fellowship.

This is also necessary to *add moral power to our example.* Our ecclesiastical system is not a system of ecclesiasticism, but the polity of a single church. It casts no shadow; it is simply a force and a presence, like magnetism or electricity. It has no General Assembly, no General Conference, no General Convention, as its authoritative head, or heart,—no circumscribing ligatures. Under these circumstances, harmony and fraternity, from the impulse of Christian love, not as a result of sectarian organization and drill, are significant facts. We therefore occupy a favored position for showing a high order of fellowship; and we owe it to Christ, and to Christianity, to exhibit to the world a style of loving intimacy which shall not be resolved, nor resolvable, into sectarianism, or the natural result of intercourse under a common organization, or even a laudable *esprit du corps.* We need to show a lesson of that noble union which springs from the higher inspiration of a common divine faith, experience, and love,—a union, the incentives and life of which come down from above. Such an exhibition of the unifying power of Christian love over considerable spaces will make us, as a harmonious brotherhood, a sublime spectacle,—looking "forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners,"—a foretaste and prophecy of that unity and love which shall become universal among Christians hereafter, and which now and ever bless the ranks of all in heaven.

And, further, we need fellowship *as a necessity of our own hearts.* We need to give the spiritual current a larger and more generous flow than can be enjoyed in a single church, and a more definite and per-

sonal direction than when we love all good people. These are both well, but we need also an intermediate exercise of pious interest. Our churches over large districts need to meet, strike palms, and warm their hearts together, and thus get the exhuberant enlargement of a common religious joy and experience: and all the spontaneous outflow of fraternal feeling this morning, like the running of many waters, shows it.

My brethren, has not our piety suffered from just this want of the practical interflow of fellowship? Providence—in these spaceless times—has brought the churches of the Commonwealth into neighborhood; and yet, with narrow, downcast eye, we have each been attending to our private possessions as of old; and have not looked up, perceived their nearness, and extended the appropriate greeting. And this living as if the former distance existed, when it does not, has induced spiritual decay. It is cheating our hearts and Christ with an amount of friendly and loving intercourse with one another, which may, perhaps, very well have suited other days, but is no adequate measure of these changed and quickened times; and the deception has been rewarded with desolation. No, no; we are at each other's door, and, thank God, we are beginning to awake. Let us go on, and continue to observe and welcome one another, and cause our piety to throb with corresponding largeness and vigor. So shall we be enriched personally; and so shall the cause of Christ prosper among us.

For the sake, then, of our common union with Christ, and of our intimate relationship to one another; for the sake of our historic position and trust; for the sake of developing our energies, and of wisely distributing and economizing them; for the sake of increasing our moral power, and of meeting a necessity of our own hearts,—let us, my brethren, go home and say to our churches: It has come; it has come. Arise, and know, and love, and commune with one another. Open your arms and take the whole sisterhood of churches into a warmer and more loving fellowship.

ESSAY.—No. 2.

BY REV. EBENEZER CUTLER, WORCESTER.

THE RELATION OF SECRET AND FAMILY PRAYER TO CHRISTIAN PROGRESS.

Progress is advancement from a given point. For us that point is our present degree of piety and power as Christians. This degree is measured by our advancement from the mere principle of holiness given us in our new birth. For the subject presupposes our regeneration. That is not susceptible of progress; being wholly the work of God, and a finished work. Regeneration, like creation, is completed in the instant of its commencement. That is the starting-point of all Christian progress. And from that the Christian has a long race to run. Regeneration is instantaneous, but sanctification is gradual. The completion of the former is essential to the commencement of the latter. Sanctification is the growth of the regenerate soul, from the first degree of holiness to the perfect likeness of God;—the unfolding of the seed into the perfect tree—the development of the babe unto the perfect man in Christ. This perfection—this realization of the idea of holiness—is the goal towards which every Christian should with singleness of purpose constantly press. He should gladly and zealously use every means adapted to lessen his encumbrances, strengthen his powers, and accelerate his speed. It is not, then, the relation of prayer to conversion, that we are now to consider, but the relation of prayer to the convert's growth in holiness and usefulness. For though every Christian has some degree of holiness, yet so long as he is this side of Heaven he is imperfect—has room for improvement—has some remains of the old nature to slough off, and some deficiencies in holiness to supply.

What, now, is the value of prayer, as a means of sanctification?—What is prayer? Possibly to some *professing* Christians it seems a burdensome task—a disagreeable duty! But is it really an empty ceremony? Prayer is conference with God. By whom? By the unbeliever? In whose name does the unbeliever approach his offended

God? Christ declares: "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." He is the only Mediator by whom any man can draw near to God. But to pray in His name one must have confidence in His mediation—must plead His merits as the ground of all expected and of all possible favor. Such a man is an evangelical believer, is born of God, and is under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. To him prayer is no mere formality, but a precious, priceless privilege, purchased and conferred by the sufferings of Christ,—"In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him."

But why does the Christian delight in prayer? Because he has imperative spiritual wants, and prayer is the appointed means by which he may satisfy them at the only Fountain of spiritual supplies. "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full," says Christ. No true prayer, then, is ever offered in vain. Appointed by God, indited by the Holy Spirit, expressive of conscious necessities and desires and of faith in Christ as the ever prevailing Advocate, prayer is a power by which the feeble suppliant may move Omnipotence to do him service. If a man will not mock the hunger of his child with a serpent or a stone, "how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" For the love and compassion of God towards the believer are greater than a man's for his son—surer than a woman's for her helpless child. And the believer seeks his Heavenly Father in prayer for spiritual nourishment as naturally as the infant seeks the mother's breast. The believing *suppliant* is also the joyful *recipient* of divine grace. A prayerless Christian is a misnomer.

The believer, having once "tasted that the Lord is gracious," has a constant desire for more grace. Though every desire for spiritual blessings arises from a conscious want, and every prayer is answered with a satisfying supply, yet every supply increases the relish of spiritual things, quickens the sense of want, awakens stronger desires towards God, and prompts to more energetic prayer. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." What is true prayer but this hungering and thirsting after God? But the hunger is satisfied, and the thirst is slaked, and there is a growth in holiness. By unceasing prayer the development of the spiritual life is kept in unceasing motion. A man might as well try to live without breathing, as a Christian without prayer. Prayer is the respiratory process by which the Christian appropriates the air of Heaven; and his conscious desires and his faith in Christ are correlated functions of the soul, constituting as it were the arterial and veinous system through which its vitalizing force is kept in constant circulation. Thus paayer

carries the soul longing and craving up to God, and brings it back again with a new degree of purification and of divine life and power. As prayer is thus followed by increase of spiritual life, so by this increase the spirit of prayer is increased. The more the Christian advances in his conquests over sin, the stronger are his desires to become holy as God is holy. Thus prayer and sanctification are reciprocally means and ends—each is promoted by the other—though prayer is an *exercise* and sanctification a *state* of the believing soul. The more prayerful the Christian is the more holy he becomes, and the more holy, the more prayerful. Every new degree of holiness is a higher spiritual level from which he approaches nearer the Throne, and with more profound and vivid and energizing desires. Prayer is *essential* to progress; and will be, till progress shall no longer be possible. And it will be more and more highly esteemed as a privilege, and more and more effectual as a means, till the soul shall be filled with all the fulness of God, and prayer shall be turned into praise.

Such being the law of spiritual growth, there is a necessity that prayer first and mainly be secret. Religion is a matter between the individual and God. Piety is a personal possession which no man can give to another, and no man take from another. No man is a Christian by virtue of a Christian ancestry. The Church of Christ is not a series of pious generations, but the aggregate of distinct regenerated individuals. Though as a sinner every one belongs to a race, and is therefore affected by the first sin of the first to fall, yet as a Christian he is as isolated as an angel. His state of reconciliation to God does not affect another's, and is not affected by another's. He was personally guilty, and exposed to personnl suffering. And though Christ died for all, yet he died for him in particular. Every man is required to repent of his own sins, and to believe in Christ for his own salvation. And the Spirit singles him out and regenerates him by himself,—as the mysterious wind selects a single leaf and causes it to quiver and rustle while all the rest are unmoved and untouched. And now as a child of God he has his own race to run, his own duties to perform, his own sanctification to promote,—which he can no more do by proxy than he can sustain his own physical well-being by employing another to eat and drink for him. To promote his own growth in holiness he must make a personal use of the necessary means. Through Christ as his Advocate with the Father, it is granted him as a personal privilege, and enjoined as a personal duty, to seek and obtain supplies of divine grace for all his spiritual wants.

But in order to pray thus effectually, the Christian must be acquaint-

ed with himself. He must look into his own heart, search every portion of it thoroughly and minutely, scan every thought and purpose and desire and passion and emotion, *in the light of God's Word*, until his sins rise into view in all their nearness and magnitude and guilt, and the hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm becomes the spontaneous confession of his own conscience. Such meditation will disclose spiritual necessities which will awaken urgent desires for relief. But in order to present these desires to God in the name of Christ, the Christian must meditate still further; he must look away from himself to God,—contemplate God's hatred of sin, and compassion for the sinner, as expressed, and commended to our confidence, in the death of his Son,—until through a personal soul-stirring sympathy with vicarious agony and anguish, Christ becomes *realized to him* as the "new and living way" of access to the Throne of grace. It is only by meditation upon Revealed truth, that the soul becomes informed with the knowledge of itself and of God, and that its wants become vivid and keenly felt and its desires and aspirations real and definite and intense.

For such conference with himself and with his Heavenly Father, the Christian needs the closet altar, the secret place, the still hour, solitude, —*needs to be alone with God.* Solitude is essential to collectedness of mind, to concentration of thought upon the great concerns of the soul, and to earnestness of supplication. To be minutely and exactly appropriate to one's own peculiar state, prayer *must* be secret. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?" When the Christian is profoundly sorrowful for his sinfulness, and intensely earnest in his desires after holiness; when he feels that his immortal interests are depending upon *success* in his conference with God; he will desire to be, seek to be, will be—*alone.* And though he feel the necessity of the duty, he will learn also the luxury of the privilege. "The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy."

Among the multitude of instances both ancient and modern which might be cited as exemplifying these views, there is none so instructive, and of such preceptive authority, as the example of him who, though he had no sin to confess and no forgiveness to crave, yet so often "withdrew to the solitary place" to hold conference with his Heavenly Father in prayer.

But Christian progress includes influence as well as growth, usefulness as well as holiness. Holiness is the essential condition to usefulness. A disciple of Christ can reflect only so much light as he has received. But *so* much he is under obligation to reflect. Where, then,

shall his usefulness begin? Where shall his influence first be felt? The light is strongest nearest the reflector, and diminishes in power in proportion as its rays are extended and diffused. A Christian, therefore, should remember that next to his own spiritual welfare he should seek the welfare of those whom God has caused to be most intimately associated with him. According to the Divine arrangement, the immediate sphere of every Christian's influence and usefulness is in his own household. As there is a vital union of the believer with God, so there is a vital connection between himself and his family. "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called *their* name Adam." Husband and wife are called in the Scriptures, "one flesh." The very idea of man includes the two sexes. "The head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man." And the sense of natural obligation, as well as the Word of God, teaches parents to nourish and protect and care for their offspring. And especially does the Word of God require parents to be watchful for the spiritual welfare of their children. The connection between them is as vital as that between the vine and its branches; so that the children are blessed or cursed for the parent's sake. It is therefore next to praying in secret, for a Christian to pray with his wife and children. His intimate knowledge of their spiritual condition enables him to pray with them with peculiar appropriateness. Loving them as he loves his own life, his desires for their spiritual welfare must be almost if not quite as intense as for his own. True, it is not in his power to convert them. His instrumentality is not an efficient cause; yet if he exert it in obedience to God, and in prayerful, trustful dependence upon God to honor the use of His appointed means, the Spirit may, and probably will, descend in answer to his prayer and regenerate them. And if they, too, are Christians they can join in the prayer he offers, and adopt it as their own just so far as it expresses their conscious wants and desires and their faith in Christ as their Great High Priest and Advocate. Thus the Saviour's promise, that a Christian's secret prayer shall be rewarded openly, shall be fulfilled first in his salutary influence upon the members of his own family. If a Christian is not useful in respect of the spiritual well-being of his own family, whom he knows so intimately and loves so tenderly, and by whom he is so tenderly loved and so intimately known, how shall he expect to be useful in the sanctification of the Church and in the conversion of the world! His family should be a household church, and himself the minister at the altar. He will hardly be able to bring up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, except in connection with fam-

ily prayer. Unless he reflect his "light unto all that are in the house," how shall he make it "shine" effectually before the world!

Family prayer is allied with secret and with public, but its alliance with secret prayer and its resemblance to it, is much the closer. As by secret prayer we gain preparation for Christian usefulness in the household, so by family prayer we fulfil a condition to a salutary public influence. When Christians shall appreciate the duty and the privilege, the necessity and the value, of secret and family prayer as grounds of religious power over the community, the progress of the Redeemer's kingdom will be greatly accelerated. The Church will grow in holiness through the increasing sanctification of her members, and advance in conquests through the increasing power of their instrumentality. Think of every Christian now on the globe as accustomed to thoughtful, earnest, secret prayer, and to joining with his family morning and evening in offering united supplications for all needed blessings;—what "pen of a ready writer" could keep pace with the aggressive strides of Christianity? How long would it be before the promise should be fulfilled, that "All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God?"

ESSAY.—No. 3.

BY REV. RICHARD B. THURSTON, WALTHAM.

THE CHRISTIAN USE OF PROPERTY.

In the minds of many persons the Christian use is synonymous with the charitable and religious use of property. This is, however, by no means a complete statement. The Christian use of property is not the particular use of a portion, but the right use of all our material possessions and acquisitions.

In that broad and just sense the subject before us assumes the most commanding importance and the most comprehensive relations. It touches the greatest interests of every individual and family, every town, state, and empire of the world.

Settle what is the Christian use of property, in principle and detail, and you settle the agitating question of slavery; for that question really is, what, with Christian sanction, is property and the use of it. You settle great questions of peace and war; for a class of objects for which wars have been waged is of the nature of property; and always the sinews of war are property. You settle important questions of principles and methods relating to commercial enterprise and the advancement of civilization. You settle vital questions of means for the support of religious institutions at home and abroad. You settle, as Christ settled for the young ruler, practical questions of salvation; for men give their souls in exchange for the world in the form of property; and by the mammon of unrighteousness they may make to themselves friends who will receive them into the everlasting habitations.

In a word, the question, What is the Christian use of property, underlies all temporal interests and is inseparably connected with spiritual interests. There is but one question of greater moment before the Church and the world to-day; and that is, is Christianity true?

The subject will be treated in the light both of nature and of revelation—of revelation because Christ is the communicator of truth; aud he would have us accept the instruction contained in both Testaments—

of nature, because he would have us use property for its true ends, according to the divine scheme in nature. All such use is Christian use in the highest sense; and no answer to the question assigned me for discussion, which is less comprehensive, can be at all adequate to the need. It would not otherwise cover the points which should be settled in the profound convictions and most faithful practice of the community.

For the sake of precision a few propositions will be laid down. Under them some topics will be passed with the briefest statements. Others which demand more amplification will be discussed as concisely as possible.

First. The Christian use of property implies a sincere and practical recognition of the divine Proprietorship over our possessions and ourselves. This is a most important proposition; and departure from it is a radical error and sin, whether in the Church, or the world.

The Scriptural and Christian doctrine is: "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein. The silver and the gold are the Lord's, and the cattle on a thousand hills." In the sacred oracles the possessions which we call ours, and which men generally hold as if by some vague title of nature, or conventional agreement, are repeatedly declared to be given to us by God himself. The foundation and substance of our right of property is the dominion over the earth, its productions, and the inferior creatures with which man was invested and crowned in Eden.

This single fact of itself should banish slavery as to its essence forever from the Church and the world; although some form of servitude might remain; for it is not right that any human power should constitute that being an article of property, whom God has constituted with all the rights of a holder of property.

The fact that God has given us the grant of dominion does not prove, however, that we are independent in the acquisition and use of property. On the other hand, taken with its connections, it proves our dependence and subjection to him. He qualifies and limits the right he has given. The laws of honesty in business, and of charity and religion which require certain disposals of portions of our resources, are important qualifications and limitations of that right. So also are providential events which by wind and flood and drought and fire arrest our use and take away our substance.

In reference to God, then, it is a miserable falsity which often drops from the lips of men: "It is mine and I have a right to do what I will with my own."

It is in divine accordance with all this that God charged the people of the covenant, when he had brought them into the promised land of plenty and riches: "Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, and say in thine heart, my power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God; for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth."

It is in the same divine accordance that Tyre, after being in Eden the garden of God, after being covered with every precious stone, after being set upon the holy mountain of God, was cast as profane out of the mountain of God; because iniquity was found in her; her heart was lifted up because of her beauty; and the midst of her was filled with violence by the multitude of her merchandise. She perished, not by reason of wealth, but because she sinned in the use of her wealth.

These are scriptural and Christian views of God's supremacy, and of the present connection of his law and his providence with property. They are as important to Europe and America as they were to Palestine and Tyre.

It should be added that when we say in our Church covenant, in the reception of members: "You cheerfully consecrate all your powers and possessions to the service and glory of God," we enforce upon them and ourselves no new and arbitrary claim, and no barren duty, pious in terms but really empty, unpractical and fruitless; rather we declare our allegiance to God in the world, and our cordial submission to a permanent and universal obligation under his moral government, binding upon all men and suitably recognized by those who assume the name of Christ.

Secondly. The uses to which property may be legitimately devoted with Christian sanction are comprised in the following particulars:

1st. Self-support, and the support of those naturally dependent upon us is a Christian use of property. In that support may be included social and intellectual privileges, travelling for health, for enlargement of mind, for the discharge of obligations affectionately due to our kindred, and many incidental interests. This is a primary use; and both Scripture and nature teach, he that provideth not for his own hath denied the faith.

2d. Investing for a prudent future competence and for the accumulation of wealth is a Christian use of property. The labor bestowed in manifold forms upon the earth is rewarded with a surplus of production above consumption by our necessities. By divine promise the hand of the diligent is made rich; and parents ought, says an Apostle, to lay up for their children. God means that out of the hills we shall dig brass,

and of the stones make iron. He means that flocks and herds and silver and gold shall be multiplied. He means that chariots shall rage in the streets, and justle, one against another, in the broad ways, shall seem like torches and run like the lightnings. He means that the gates of the rivers shall be opened, and swift ships shall make highways of the trackless oceans. He means that the tangled wilderness shall blush with gardens of flowers; that the clay beds and granite ledges shall rise into cities opulent, magnificent and happy. HE GIVETH POWER TO GET WEALTH.

3d. The promotion of art is a Christian use of property. The continual surplus, which rewards labor with increase of riches, has higher use than that of mere accumulation in the embellishment and refinement of life. God makes every thing beautifnl in its time. He has made man to love the beautiful. When he converts a savage to holiness he wakens in him a new aspiration after the beautiful, and crowns him with a new personal beauty. He gives to substances of nature the qualities which are indispensable, and to men the skill and taste which are requisite to fashion them into forms of beauty and objects of delight, suited to the uses of a refined and elevated mind. The tabernacle and temple of the former dispensation prove the point. The promises to be fulfilled under the new prove it. It is among the glorious things spoken of Zion: "As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there"—all the delights of music. Her stones are to be laid with fair colors and her foundations with sapphires. Her windows shall be of agates and her gates of carbuncles, and all her borders of pleasant stones; when all her children shall be taught of the Lord, and their peace shall be great. The arts in which genius makes its nearest approach to creative power, architecture, painting, sculpture, music, by which spiritual things are expressed, open Christian uses of wealth. Of God alone we are forbidden to make a graven image or any likeness.

4th. The support of civil government is a Christian use of property. The powers that be are ordained of God; and it is according to the pleasure of Christ that men should render unto Cesar the things that are Cesar's, tribute to whom tribute is due, and custom to whom custom. Revenues are indispensable for the great ends for which governments exist with divine sanctions.

5th. Assistance of the poor by charitable donations is a Christian use of property.

6th. The support of the gospel at home and of missions for the dissemination of the gospel among all nations is a Christian use of property.

The last two topics need no development in this place; and I pass to the next proposition.

Thirdly. Under the gospel every holder of property is made free to determine for himself the proportion of his property, which he should distribute to the different legitimate objects, personal, domestic, social, charitable and religious. I mean that he is independent of the dictation of other men in that matter. Each one is a steward of God; and he exercises his functions for himself alone, responsible, (except in extreme cases, as when a man withholds support from his own family,) only to the Supreme Proprietor. With property in his possession and the Bible in his hand, he is as free in the use of his substance as in the choice of his creed. Like the condition of his soul's salvation it is referred to his private judgment. It is between himself and God. Others may teach him the principles of the Scriptures, and endeavor to persuade him of his duty, as in other instances; but no more than you can dictate to the trees of a garden how much fruit they shall bear, can any other determine for the rich man in his opulence, or the poor man in his penury, what he shall devote to charity or to religion. Yet we shall always love best the bountiful tree; and we have reason to love it best.

In another respect every holder of property is endowed with a species of freedom in the disposal of it, while yet bound in duty to God and to man; that is to say, he is placed under general principles of obligation which he should apply and fulfil according to his own discretion, and in view of his accountability to the Creator.

Under the old dispensation it was otherwise. Divine statutes then controlled the proportions of giving to an important extent; while room was still left for free-will offerings. It is now commonly understood among Christians that those arithmetical ratios are not in force; yet I think the substance or spirit of them is in force; and that they should still be used for practical direction or guidance.

The gospel does not appear to require less, perhaps it ought to be said it requires more than the Mosaic law, in the offerings of charity and of religious zeal. It does it, however, in the way of a greater personal liberty. It puts rigid, mathematical precepts almost out of sight, but covers the whole extent and sum of riches with the principles of love and sacrifice. It does not say, give a tenth of all that the Lord gives you; give the first fruits of the tree and the flock; give in literal measure as the Jew was required to give, till a third probably of his income was exacted; but, rather, give all in your heart's acknowledgement of God's superior claims; give till you have paid, so to speak, honest rent in his service for the fields and houses and ships and stocks

with which he entrusts you; give till you feel it in your self-denials; give till every selfish, unsanctified passion is crushed and strangled, even if it takes all you have to do it; give till in the presence of the poor man whom you must meet on the judgment day, till standing by the cross of the Redeemer, a faithful conscience assures you, your duty is discharged. In a word, under the gospel there seems to be but one rule for giving; and that is the law of love: on the side of our selfishness no toleration; on the side of our beneficence no limit but ability; when a Christian conscience bestows, no restraint; when it withholds, no compulsion.

Yet giving is not to be hasty, blind, or undiscriminating. It should be discreet and intelligent in regard to all its objects, as well as grounded in the rights of God and the affections of a Christian heart. Especially it should never indulge generosity at the expense of justice. That which should pay a debt should never go for charity, or religion. According to a primary law of God it is property already in the right of another; and to turn it aside from its true destination is equivalent to robbing both man and God, who hates robbery for burnt offering.

In the light of the proposition we are still considering, it is obvious that no definite answer can be given to questions which are frequently asked, the substance of which is: how much ought we, with our means, and in our circumstances, to give to religious and charitable objects. This essay, therefore, does not attempt it. God himself leaves such questions with those whom he has entrusted with the endowment of property, just as he has entrusted them with the responsible use of his holy oracles. They for themselves should be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

It is a corollary of some importance, which should be derived from the proposition we are considering, that our benevolent societies and collecting agents should take heed in regard to the measures they adopt for replenishing exhausted treasuries. They must not expect the streams to be fuller than the fountain can send forth. They must not presume upon more fruit than the tree can yield. That is, they should not endeavor to obtain larger contributions than the intelligent, willing piety of the community bestows. Whatever they may secure more by an unhealthy stimulus of solicitation or dictation, is likely to produce an unfavorable reaction. It tends to kill the tree by whose fruit they live.

To men of large income and accumulated wealth, their freedom, while yet attended with obligation, in the use of their resources brings a momentous responsibility. In God's plan of the world, the difference between using riches for the ends which he has appointed, and for the

mean, false purposes of self-indulgence, or self-aggrandizement, is as wide as heaven from earth; and the results are as wide asunder as heaven and hell.

I proceed to the next proposition.

Fourthly. The instructions of the gospel concerning the use of property are strictly universal. They are in no respect particular, special, local, or temporary. They were suited to the emergencies of the Apostolic age. They are equally adapted to the present age. They will be as applicable and perfect in the Millennium. It may be fairly said, they anticipate the millennial uses. They were designed to be sufficient for the direction of every individual, and for the great problems of society, under the government of God, while the world shall stand.

The bearing and importance of this proposition will appear more fully in the sequel.

I will now pass to some observations intended to secure the useful and practical ends of the subject, speaking in the light of the propositions which have been presented.

In the first place, I call attention to the fact admitted by every upright and benevolent as well as Christian mind, that there is great lack of charitable and religious liberality, and much self-indulgence, extravagance, and criminality in the use and expenditure of property.

Many persons express much perplexity in regard to the measure of their duty in giving. Many, unquestionably, miss the true mean between parsimony and prodigality. According to the common judgment, many bestow a very small proportion of their resources upon beneficent in comparison with selfish uses. There is great want of the Christian balance of equity in the use of money for sacred purposes, even among those who profess to be conscientious and religious men. They do not all give according to their ability, and as the Lord has prospered them; unless some give much beyond their ability. Some bear self-denying and heavy burdens. Of others it can scarcely be said that, relatively, they touch those burdens with one of their fingers. Some accumulate and hoard avariciously; and occasionally an insane lust goes to the extent of the miser, who

> "Throws up his interest in both worlds,
> First starved in this, then damned in that to come."

Others, like Cataline, are covetous of the possessions of other men and lavish of their own. Others make investment in methods of gain which coin their profits out of the follies, vices, miseries and destruction of their fellow men, in scorn of every law of nature and of God; as if they

were at liberty to make iron, not only out of stones, but of human bones, and to dig brass and gold, not only out of the hills, but also out of human hearts. A frightful proportion of all the wickedness and bitter sorrow and suffering which agonize the world is brought to pass in connection with the unlawful and unchristian use, or, as it should rather be said, the inhuman and impious misuse of property.

It needs scarcely to be added, that in view of the actual proprietorship of the Creator, and the instructions he has given as the moral Governor of this world, the use of property for purposes which conflict with his will and do detriment to the interests and rights of others, is not a mere trivial, technical sin of sounding hollow creeds, but direct transgression and rebellion, overt iniquity of deep turpitude in the sight of holy beings. The perversion of trusted funds and the corrupt use of the revenues of the state by fraudulent officials, do but feebly suggest the nature and enormity of the guilt.

In the second place, I call attention to the almost consummate blessedness which would follow the universal use of property on Christian principles.

As it is, diligence and enterprise, under favor of a bountiful providence, are rewarded with vast accumulations of riches. The immense warehouses, the swift ships, the lengthening railways, the multiplying acres of tillage, the growth of cities bear witness to unexampled material prosperity in our own and other lands. Statistical tables present, not only the aggregate, but the increase of wealth in amounts which exceed our power of conception. But many a palatial structure is a hall of temptation and a gate of perdition. Many a ship is bound on adventure which the laws justly call piracy. Long streets are given up to filth and misery and sin. Multitudes are homeless, hungry and cold. Millions are oppressed. Society groans over taxation for pauperism and crime, for armies and navies.

But let men universally coincide with the purposes of our heavenly Father in the use of property; then, neither for amassing riches, nor "for a living," would they open the doors of criminal indulgence; all the gainful haunts where irregular and sinful passions seek gratification would be shut up; every mart of business would become a temple of integrity or a highway of benevolence and honor; every ship would be as innocent as a white-winged dove against the sky; on every plantation what is just and equal would be rendered to masters and servants; no tempters would lurk among the throngs of men to ensnare the unwary; the full hand and untiring foot of charity would find out the needy, and Lazarus would not die at Dives' gate; politics would

be divorced from peculation; capitols would be palaces of honor; and statesmen would be men. Homes would be supported with affectionate bountifulness; poverty would frequently become competence, and competence would rise to opulence; the ornamental arts would go hand in hand with the useful, and utility herself be made more useful when arrayed in beauty; the state would be maintained in true majesty and untarnished purity; the cry of want would be changed for thanksgiving and song; and the borders of true religion be carried forward, more rapidly than the advance of civilization, till the whole earth would be the Lord's. The world's wild despairing features of misery and sin would become righteousness and peace. The very face of mankind would be transfigured.

In the third place, I call attention to some topics of importance as conditions of promoting the Christian use of property, especially for purposes of charity and religion.

Here a negative as well as positive view is required. Some things should not be done which are done.

The world should not be depreciated and abused. Property and accumulation of property should not be preached down and prayed down on Sunday, while yet of necessity diligently pursued all the week beside. It is a manly and Christian thing to use this world as not abusing it. As an affectionate and faithful son would have a special satisfaction in an ample estate and beautiful mansion bestowed upon him by a father's love, and would prize it the more because it was his gift, while yet loving him most, and the more for having conferred such a patrimony; so should we highly esteem the world because God has given it and made it so rich an abode; while yet we love him most; and the more for his paternal gift.

With this we are persuaded the scope and spirit of the Scriptures agree.

"Life is real—life is earnest;"

and in business,

"We may make our lives sublime."

It is worthy of our best powers, as the creatures of God, to improve the creation of God according to his purpose. It is a great and noble thing to become rich and to use riches with a rich heart—with a humane and godlike spirit. Wealth does indeed bring a proportionate, and that is a great responsibility, in view of which the poor should by no means envy the opulent; but to understand the world and a wealthy man's position

in it; to develope its hidden treasures and appropriate its manifold resources to true uses; to set forward enterprises that bless poor families with well requited labor; to lift up great interests of the state and of mankind at once by the methods and the results of business; to refine and embellish the economy of our social life; to diminish the sum of human wretchedness, and spread wider the circumference of human comforts and enjoyments; to carry abroad the glorious gospel of the blessed God, and make the light of everlasting life dispel the shadow of death on heathen realms—it is all great and noble—it is the truly humane purpose and the divine intent in the use of property; the rich men who are doing it are benefactors; and even for their errors in doing it they should not be assailed with harsh, untimely, and undiscriminating censures: God himself entrusts them with high offices in his plan of the world. It is not strange that, according to the principles of revealed religion and the course of providence, wealth is the recompense of enterprise, and in a higher sense of virtue and piety. Gain is one of the rewards of godliness.

Again, religious instruction in regard to the use of property should never conflict with sound principles of political economy. It is evident at a glance that Scripture correctly interpreted must agree with those principles; for they lie in nature; and the Author of nature and of revelation is the same. Yet it cannot be doubted that there has been much pulpit instruction which entirely overlooked this rule. In discoursing of spiritual-mindedness, overcoming the world, setting the affections on things above, making sacrifices for the kingdom of heaven's sake, and kindred subjects, unquestionably ministers have often called up in the minds of their hearers, intelligent, active business men, sitting before them with grave face and secret smile, such thoughts as these: "You are not a practical man; you do not understand what you are saying; if we should do as you teach, you could not be supported." Such preaching makes no impression on the judgement or conscience. It produces no more good fruit than snow falling on a monument of stone. It does not deserve a better result. It is not *true* preaching. It may be very sincere, very fervent; but it is also very narrow. The preacher is like a sailor, looking through a ship's telescope for a distant sail, or a rock on the coast; whereas with open eye he should sweep the horizon of God's truth. When he discourses of the interests of a kingdom he should have in his view more than a little hillock, or a single mountain summit.

The world's pauperism, ignorance, vice, crime, idolatry, misery and irreligion of every name are indeed to be removed or relieved by char-

ity and Christianity, by human love, working with and for divine grace; and yet, under the methods of the divine government, the object can be accomplished only in connection with sound political economy.

The world's enterprises must and will go on. In the light shed upon our subject, however, they should go on only under the law and the benediction of religion. Science, literature, art, improvement should be promoted, but in their true order. They are comprised in the divine scheme of the world and should be encouraged in our humble interpretations of that scheme, so far as they are controlled by Christian principle.

From this it follows, that within certain limits, which every one entrusted with the use of property must define for himself, it is better to buy a work of art, a superfluity, as it is sometimes falsely called, a seemingly idle though not a useless ornament, than to give directly for charity or religion in the common use of the terms; though charity and religion will be satisfied. For illustration: you have ten dollars to spare, as we say familiarly, of which you would make the best use. You can give it to the next missionary collector who shall call, or to the family of idle vagrants who beg at your door, to feed the hungry, and clothe the naked; but across the street is the family of the poor engraver, who strives in pinching indigence to feed and clothe and educate his own children, and asks for employment as the best boon of heaven after the grace which brings salvation. By all means buy his picture; and while with tears of gratitude he is invoking the blessing of God upon you, hang it in your parlor, and let your eyes lightened with Christian peace rest upon a thing of beauty and a joy forever.

The illustration is not employed to suggest the proper action on any particular occasion which calls for charity; for that action must always be determined in the light of the circumstances that attend the call; but it is brought for the sake of the light it sheds on a great fact which continually exists, beyond the reach of our sight, but not beyond our computation and knowledge. Interests of a mighty sweep fall within the compass of the illustration.

To present the idea in a different form, let me repeat, the earth produces as the reward of labor a surplus above consumption for accumulation and improvement. Now let accumulation go on without enlargement of uses, and it must evidently frustrate the divine economy of the world by an unprofitable hoarding, and much more by inevitably begetting the passions of avarice, or lazy self-indulgence—a result morally fatal in either direction. Let that result be averted by giving freely to the poor, and even for the conversion of the heathen, yet without open-

ing for them new occupations. It will multiply the number of idle, worthless pensioners on Christian bounty—a result equally fatal. In the name of charity it would ultimately dry up the fountains of charity. The gospel was not intended to produce such a state of things. The escape is in the continually new uses of advancing civilization, refinement, and religion—uses of taste and piety, for which God has provided, and by which the otherwise idle hands and minds shall be made busy. The self-denial which Christianity inculcates is not to be confounded with asceticism or austerity. It does not hold that righteousness is less right because it may be presented in the robes of enjoyment. It is grateful to God for his favor when obligation is transfigured into privilege.

The man who can build a factory, or a steamship, or paint such a picture as the Transfiguration, is worth immeasurably more in God's plan of this world than the savage who hollows a log into a canoe with fire, and makes features already horrid with sin more frightful with ghastly smear. Men of genius in mechanics and art, like Fulton and Allston and Goodyear, are to be honored with Bezaleel and Aholiab, filled with the spirit of God in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship to devise cunning works. Such men are ministers to God's purposes; and they who worthily earn a support by entering into their labors, should be helped forward by the political economy of the State and the Christian economy of the Church.

It is then a Christian use of property to do the minimum for thriftless pauperism, but the maximum for the encouragement of needy, honest, manly Christian industry. Well-principled labor is one of the handmaids of religion. Every man should observe the doctrine of the sacred oracles, not eating another's bread for naught. Contrary to the proverb which sometimes drops from mean lips, the world owes no man a living, whether rich or poor, who does not earn it, so long as he has the ability, in some useful occupation. The idle walk disorderly, become busy bodies, and are commanded and exhorted by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work and eat their own bread. Work then must be provided; and it is one of the best charities to offer it to those who cannot obtain it for themselves. All that labor also which is not needed for direct production should be diligently employed for improvement. The indolent, thriftless and vagrant must be raised to a better welfare, not more by Christian charity than by their own efforts, stimulated by due encouragement and recompense; as the sluggish waters surge forward in their own motion, when they are lifted to a higher plane by the attraction of the moon and sun.

In the light of all this, it is evident that the man who lives with mean and niggard spirit, while holding in his hands the divine trust of opulence, does no credit to his humanity, or his training in the school of Christ. If he prefesses to be a Christian, he seriously misinterprets the oracles and the providence of God. His endowment was intended for other uses.

It is further evident that much may be said very unadvisedly and foolishly in rebuke of large expenditures, such for example as are sometimes made for family mansions and in church architecture. If men of large wealth build houses commensurate with their resources, while yet they pay due respect to all the principles which should direct the use of property; and if heavy capitalists in a church, conscientiously and prayerfully asking how they shall glorify God with their riches, build a costly and splendid structure for his worship, I do not see how for *this*, or *that*, they expose themselves to just censure on the part of their fellow Christians: only in the last instance I hold that the sacred edifice should be a clean and clear gift to the Lord, laying no more tax upon the worshipper than the plainest structure. Any arrangement which pays interest on its cost turns it into an investment, and fixes upon it a secular and mercenary character; makes its formal consecration an inconsistency, for it is not property really devoted; and in my judgment is offensive to God. The ointment with which the Savior was anointed was very precious and might have been sold for much; and there is reason to say that costly offerings may still be acceptable, even of that which might have been given to the poor.

In this connection our topic comes into the light of the fourth proposition, under which it was said the instructions given us in regard to property anticipate millennial uses. Some things are right and wise and Christian of which so much, probably, could not be said in view of present interests only, but in view of interests which rise in the future. When the nations blessed in Christ shall dwell in the abundance of peace, sitting every man under his vine and fig-tree, when prophetic visions shall become realities, Christians, it must be believed, will inhabit mansions whose magnificence will surpass the palaces of princes, and worship in sanctuaries with whose consecrated splendor even the temple of Solomon can scarcely be compared; for they will then honor Jehovah, as now they should, with offerings of their best possessions; and no other way than this is made known by which even the millennial piety will be preserved from the corruption naturally incidental to wealth. Thus as the distant spires of churches are sometimes seen rising above the dwellings and working places of men, and shining in

the golden light of heaven, so Christian uses of property sometimes rise above the common plane of business and charity, and shine in the anticipated glory of the regenerated and transfigured world.

So much has been said of the political economy of the Christian use of property, because it is germane to the subject, and because we believe it has important practical bearings. If any inquire, however, how far we may go, by force of such principles, in the indulgenee of a taste for elegance and the fine arts, I can reply only as before, each individual with the light he has must decide for himself. God allows a present play anticipative of the golden ages of love; but we are not yet in the millennium; and though none can prescribe for others the application of the sacred precepts, yet I cannot forbear to interpose a caution. I would by no means lower the standard of Christian liberality. I would have Christians occupy higher ground than they, as a body, have yet reached. Confessedly, in regard to most persons, the danger of misusing property lies on the side of our indulgence and selfishness. To most of us self is an intimate friend, always close at hand, an eager, enticing solicitor, a clamorous beggar. We must not forget that the poor man is a brother, that the gospel is to be conveyed by Christian offerings to nations that sit in the shadow of death, that we should have the mind of Christ.

I pass to the positive conditions of promoting the charitable and religious use of property, speaking of two only.

The first is the correction of public sentiment and quickening of the public conscience by sound, scriptural instruction. This is necessary to set the pulpit right with the Bible, and right with the world of production and business.

The foundation of our right of property, the limitation of that right, and the divine appointment of uses need to be scripturally set forth. Multitudes do not recognise the facts. Men must be made to understand that God retains his original proprietorship as Creator; and all who have possessions are entrusted with them in stewardship for the purposes only which he has authorized. The literal terms which express his will should not be evaporated by a mistaken process of spiritualization. They are not intended for the Church alone in some mystical, transcendental sense, miscalled evangelical, having a pious sound on Sunday, but no practical force through the week: they are for all men; and departure from them is overt sin, whether in or out of the Church.

True it has been said, every man must determine for himself his duty in the use of property; but he is bound to do it under the divine instructions.

It has been decided in our country that no civil or ecclesiastical authority shall exact tithes for the support of religion; though it does for charity; but that fact should not be perverted into a discharge of men at their own pleasure from the obligation of devoting property to religion. It simply throws them upon their individual responsibility to God; and he requires the tribute. He holds all accountable for the use of their resources as he does for their treatment of the gospel, whatever their faith and their conduct. In relation to him, men have not the right to withhold all charitable and religious offerings. If any use God's property for purposes which he does not justify, or refuse to use it for what he requires, there is the intrinsic wickedness of dishonesty, sometimes towards men, always towards the Sovereign of men. The sin is of the nature of embezzlement—a private and false use of trusted funds, which we have no more right to divert from their legitimate object than we have to steal. The scriptural assertion of such men is, Ye have robbed God.

This should be the doctrine of the Church; and it should be kindly, wisely and firmly maintained and applied to the world. The Christian use of property is its use for appointed purposes, under the will of God, according to the true economy of the world and of the gospel. Every other use should be denounced as sinful.

Not to dwell on the effects of this doctrine in society, let the topic be closed with the words of Harris, in the little book entitled Mammon.

"The solitary principle, that we hold property as subordinate agents for God, were it only felt, embraced, allowed to have unobstructed operation in our practice would of itself be sufficient to break up the present system of selfishness, and give an entirely new aspect to the cause of benevolence."

The second positive condition of promoting the charitable and religious use of property, is the increase of love for Christ and his kingdom. That great and sacred motive which should have the supremacy in our affections, must rule and overrule, not only in the Church but also in the world nominally Christian—not only in the worship of the Sabbath, but also in the labor and gain of the week. Men must not only look on the fields and oceans as plains of industry and highways of enterprise, and upon social refinement and imaginative art as affording noble uses of material things; but they must also regard them all as means of the divine honor, to be enjoyed with Christian gratitude and consecrated to Christian ends. At the same time they must learn to love all men as brethren, and to assist the needy and enlighten the darkened as the objects of their fraternal care. They must be as it were set face to

face with the heathen and savage populations of the globe, to learn their duty to them; while they also stand by the cross of Christ, that all selfishness may be dissolved as ice in summer seas in the warm melting presence of redeeming love: and filled with the spirit of the Savior, they may be fitted for the service to which they are called.

The universal Christian use of property must attend and attest the progress of true Christianity and vital godliness; for nothing less than the divine power which accompanies the gospel can bring it to pass. Nothing less can write out the history of all mutual, human transactions in the fair terms of integrity, benevolence and piety. Nothing less can arrest the headlong steps of men who make gain of sin, unclench the hands of covetousness, and unlock the heart of selfishness, that like the Dead Sea can only receive into its own salt and bitter bosom, while it gives out no living stream. Who is he that overcometh the world, is the challenge of the gospel, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is the victory, even our faith.

Here, then, we completely anticipate and prevent the suspicion which might possibly arise, that the previous view is inconsistent with some of the great doctrines of Christianity, or with a life of Christian spirituality. The universal law of God is a law of love. Men have revolted from him; and in nothing is their transgression of his law more direct and flagrant than in the use often made of property.; or, speaking more truly, the abuse of a divine trust. Now the gospel comes in to bring them back to harmony with that law in its full extent towards man and towards God; and when property is used according to the Christian instructions, it is continually an exercise of Christian and gracious affections. Is it for the family? It is with an affection which God requires. Is it for improvement? It is with a desire which God creates and sanctifies. Is it for the State? It is with patriotism, a love which God appoints and overrules. Is it for charity? It is with philanthropy, a love which obeys the second great commandment. Is it for religion? It is with godliness, a love which flows into vital obedience of all divine commands. But in order that all may be thus, the redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ and the renewing of the Holy Ghost are indispensable; and we have only to glance at the facts of the world's history, as they appear side by side with the Christian doctrine, to discover the unavoidable force of the statement.

In the light, then, of the actual relations of the gospel to the world, there can be no ground for apprehension that the views which have been presented can tend in the least degree to lower the tone of piety, or make the Christian life secular. On the other hand they turn the

moral drift of labor and business in the opposite direction. They do not foster a vague, sentimental, sanctimonious pietism; but they do encourage a practical, earnest, conscientious spirituality. Christians must live in the world, though they are not of the world; and when we carry out the instructions of the Bible in all the lawful pursuits of men, performing the labors of this life with the dispositions and for the objects which God requires, we do not secularize religion; but we consecrate and sanctify occupation and gain. We write Holiness to the Lord even upon the bells of the horses. We bring the world into its true relations to the government of Jehovah. We surrender it to Christ, not in hollow terms of a covenant subscribed in decent, yet formal, empty profession, and forgotten in the ungodly routine of the week, but in the literal substantial economy of living and business. We make the world what God intended it should be, a path of safe and salutary discipline for Christian pilgrims, and a highway for chariots of salvation.

It is then upon the increase of love for Christ and his kingdom, upon love truer, deeper, purer, more fervent and more self-denying, we must rely for the more liberal devotion of property to the uses of charity and religion. Such love will save millions from misuse. It will swell the streams of benevolence flowing to the needy everywhere. It will replenish the impoverished treasuries of Christian institutions. In proportion as it shall more and more rule in the hearts of men; for brass they will bring gold, and for iron they will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron. The most precious things and the abundance of the Gentiles will be brought to Zion; and her walls will become salvation and her gates praise.

ESSAY.—No. 4.

BY REV. NAHUM GALE, LEE.

THE DUTY OF CHURCH MEMBERS TO ENGAGE IN THE ACTIVE SERVICE OF CHRIST IN THEIR SEVERAL CALLINGS.

I. *This duty is enjoined in the Holy Scriptures.* "Preach the gospel to every creature." "Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." These words were not spoken exclusively to apostles, missionaries, and pastors; they evidently have a very wide application; throwing the responsibility of preaching the gospel, to the end of time, upon the whole brotherhood of disciples. "Thy kingdom come," is every Christian's daily prayer; which means nothing on the lips of him, who does not commit himself heartily to the use of all means and agencies in his power for the advancement of that kingdom. And does not the Saviour say to his disciples, without the least reference to office in the Church, "Ye are the light of the world;" "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father, which is in heaven?" Does not the parable of the talents teach very clearly that in Christ's kingdom capacity and opportunity measure obligation?

That direct labor for Christ should not be confined to Church officers is evident from such instructions as the following addressed to churches as a body: "Edify one another." "Brethren be not weary in well doing." "To do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men."

It is evident that Christ and his apostles acknowledged but one standard of consecration in the Church. Says Christ, "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

Paul, in his addresses to Christians generally, reminds them that they are "called to be saints"—are "servants of God." To the Corinthians he writes, "Ye are not your own." "For ye are bought with a price;

therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's." Again, speaking of the death of Christ, Paul says to the brethren, "He died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him, which died for them."

And how earnest is the same Apostle, in addressing the Christians of Rome: "I beseech you brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Surely, no pastor, or evangelist, or apostle, could do more than this.

Peter teaches the same truth as to the one standard of consecration, when he thus addresses the "strangers scattered" through various provinces: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

II. *Every Christian promises to labor for Christ when he takes upon himself the vows of baptism.* Baptism is a consecration to the service of God. Every baptized one is devoted to the service of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. This, beyond a question, is one important element of meaning, if not the chief one, in this sacred ordinance. When Christians, therefore, assume the vows of baptism, what do they but subscribe with their own hands to be the Lord's? This is not only implied in baptism, but is expressed in our church covenants. They who profess their faith solemnly covenant with God and with one another, that they will live for Christ, as the way of Christian duty shall be made known to them. What is the import of such words as these? "We do now publicly espouse the cause of Christ, promising to be faithful in the same, and to endeavor to promote it in all proper ways." Baptism is consecration. And as there is but one formula by which this consecration is expressed, so has it but one measure and limit. All who profess faith in Christ promise to him service. Each asks, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

III. *The duty under consideration is enforced by the type of primitive piety.* The record of the Apostolic Church, on the very first page, assures us that the "disciples were all with one accord in one place." Apostles and brethren, "with the women," were together for worship, for consultation, for action for Christ. "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and one soul, neither said any of them, that aught of the things which he possessed was his own."

When the first persecution arose, "the church which was at Jerusalem were all scattered abroad, throughout the region of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Therefore, they that were scattered abroad

went everywhere preaching the word." This was a mission of laymen, no doubt, "inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost" to "teach and preach Jesus Christ." Throughout the Acts of the Apostles, and in the Epistles, incidents are often mentioned, which show that this type of piety was approved and enjoined by the apostles. Apollos, a layman, was "an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, and being fervent in the spirit, he spake, and taught diligently the things of the Lord." And having been taught by a Christian tent-maker and his wife, "the way of God more perfectly," "he helped them much who had believed through grace." Such brethren as "Zenas the lawyer," and Gaius, and Philemon, were representative men in the primitive Church. They were "laborers together" with their "teachers and pastors,"—were "fellow-helpers to the truth." Such too was that sisterhood of "elect" ladies, whose services Paul so highly prized that he wrote to a friend, "I entreat thee, help those women, which labored with me in the gospel." Read the last chapter of the Epistle to the Romans,—a church catalogue, with brief notes and comments. Phebe is "a succorer of many." Aquilla and Priscilla are "helpers in Christ Jesus," and "have a church in their house." Tryphena and Tryphosa "labor in the Lord." What a band of earnest lay helpers! How precious to the apostles and elders was their sympathy and coöperation!

And Church history shows, that while this spirit of mutual interest, sympathy, and coöperation was cherished in the brotherhood, pure religion flourished. But when the idea of a priesthood was developed; when it began to be thought that there might be in the Church a higher and a lower consecration; when laymen believed that the interests of religion might be committed to numerous church officers, and others be excused from Christian effort, then came formalism, spiritual death, popery, and the dark ages.

IV. *All Christians should labor for Christ because they have opportunity so to do.* It will not be questioned, that Christ's disciples should "do good as they have opportunity." And who has not opportunity? To the church in Philadelphia Christ said: "I have set before you an open door, and no man can shut it." Does he not say this now to the churches of our land? To the individual members there is "an open door." If there ever was a period in our history, when Christians might plead, "There are yet four months and then cometh harvest," that day has passed. This is not the time to "wait," watching for openings of Providence. The world, at our very doors, waits for a more zealous application of the gospel to its perishing masses. The Church has all the agencies of moral influence in readiness. All her auxiliary forces

of literary and theological seminaries, Sabbath schools, the press, benevolent organizations, and the like, are ready to be employed in the most vigorous manner. We want no new truth in theology tanght—no unknown principles of Christian duty discovered—no untried systems of benevolent agency organized. The great want of the Church is, that Christians, of every age and condition in life,—of every position in the Church should come to a practical recognition of their baptismal vows. What is needed, that the power of godliness may be constantly felt in the community, is a true consecration to Christ, of all his disciples,—of talents, learning, wealth, social position,—the wisdom of age, the vigor of manhood, the hopefulness of youth,—the personal adoption, with the whole heart, of that one fundamental rule of Christian life, "none of us liveth to himself."

That doors of usefulness are opened to all classes of Christians is proved by their success. Our limits admit of no details. But after gathering facts from a great variety of sources we might press the doubting and the indolent with this text: "To him who knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Witnesses rise up every day, on every side, to tell us how signally God has blessed their efforts to instruct the ignorant, to reclaim the vicious, to bring neglectors of the gospel within its sound, to lead the undecided to "stand up for Jesus," to develop Christian character, and to enkindle in the lukewarm a more earnest life of piety. And often is it true that the Holy Spirit accompanies the labors of the humblest in the church. Hear the Christian experience of converts, and how few will omit to mention some private Christian's influence in drawing them from the broad to the narrow way! Examine the condition of churches and you will find that those of earnest labors are prospering, while those which leave work for Christ, very much to pastors are stationary, or declining. An active church attracts to itself, and draws into its current the vital forces of society. The young, and the energetic love to associate themselves with the ardent and the efficient. Christians, who show a noble purpose of life, a common-sense adaptation of means to ends, and a zeal corresponding to their profession, will never labor in vain. "He that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto life eternal."

V. *The labors of all Christians are demanded, because the ministry cannot do all that is necessary for the prosperity of religion.* While success depends upon the blessing of God, there are means to be employed by Christians, without which they have no right to expect success. All these means cannot be used by the ministry. The large number of souls in some parishes, the scattered location of families in

others, the concealment of many persons in factories, shops and boarding houses, the want, in multitudes, of any parish connections or relations, frequent changes of population, and of the ministerial relation, are some of the obstacles in the way of adequate pastoral instruction, and personal influence in many places where the church is established. The pressing demands upon the pulpit in an age restless and fastidious, and the many calls upon pastors for service connected with the affairs of education, benevolence, and the church generally, abridge still more the sphere of their pastoral labors, and render it impossible for them to enter into the details of Christian service, so as to meet the diversified religious wants of the community. The ministry never could do all that was demanded to secure the success of the gospel, much less can they do it now, and in New England. As well might Moses have tried all the cases brought before him by the tribes of Israel. As well might Nehemiah have laid every stone in the wall of Jerusalem. As well might the commander of an army take upon himself all the labors of drum-major, and commissary-general, adding to his miscellaneous duties that of the ensign of a company and the corporal of a guard! In the church, as in an army, efficient action depends very much upon the perfection of its organization, and the faithfulness of each officer and private to his individual trust.

And even if possible, on the score of time and opportunity, for pastors to perform all service needed for the success of the church, no one man has such versatility of talent, that he can throw a Christian influence through all the channels opened to the hearts of men. Various gifts of many Christians must combine their power to meet the spiritual wants of all classes of people. Often, the layman may do what his pastor cannot, and the Christian lady accomplish what every officer and every brother in the church might have attempted in vain. The young man among his companions, the young lady in her school, the mother in her family, the father in his shop, or on his farm, may exert an influence supplementary to that of a faithful pastor; and that supplement may be an indispensable condition of success in winning a soul to Christ.

It may be further urged, that the many influences now at work, tending to divert the public mind from Christian truth and duty, the wide diffusion of skepticism, and the activity of the perverters of the gospel, make it needful that people should come under all means of religious culture,—means at the disposal of no one class of Christians, but intrusted to disciples of all classes, and in all positions in the Church.

While, therefore, the pastor must "watch for souls," and give himself continually to "prayer and the ministry of the word,"—must, in general, plan the work to be done, aid and guide it by advice, suggestion and direct personal effort, according to ability, still laymen, for the most part, must carry out in detail many of the agencies which bring the gospel home to the individual man and child. Water, carried from the reservoir by the main duct, must flow through small pipes to every house on every street of the city, that at a hydrant in each room the servant may fill his pitcher, and the little child her cup. But for this distribution to the household and the individual, many lips would be parched with thirst, though abundance of water might be at hand imprisoned in its iron cells. So is it with the "water of life."

VI. *The duty in question is enforced by the genius of Congregationalism.* Our Church polity is based upon the principle of sympathy and coöperation by the entire body of believers in covenant relation. All the brotherhood have the responsibility of sastaining the institutions and ordinances of the kingdom of Christ, so far as this can be done by human agency. This responsibility cannot be lodged in any head of the Church, holding the keys of Peter; it cannot be thrown off upon any hierarchy of teachers and rulers; it cannot be delegated to any leaders, self-constituted, or chosen. The brotherhood,—all in covenant relations,—men and women, are responsible for the kingdom of God within them, and around them, and afar off, to the extent of their several ability.

Does our church organization concede large privileges to the brotherhood? Then have they obligations corresponding. Have the brethren precious rights? So have they also important duties. "Unto whom much is given, of him shall much be required."

Surely, then, the brethren of Congregational churches cannot persuade themselves that most of their Christian duties can be performed by proxy. The genius of Congregationalism forbids any moral power in the church to be latent. It enters a protest, in the name of Christ, against the rolling up of talents in napkins. It pleads, with all its evangelical, apostolic, and puritan eloquence, that lighted candles shall not be put under beds. With such teaching by the great principles of our church polity, every servant knows his Lord's will.

Let this will be done by the almost twenty-five thousand brethren, and the more than fifty thousand sisters in the Congregational churches of Massachusetts, and a brighter day would soon dawn upon the land of the Pilgrims' sepulchres.

VII. *This service for Christ is necessary for the development of Christian graces.* Exertion is indispensable to development. Without it there can be no complete and symmetrical Christian character. The infant graces of the disciple are nurtured into vigorous manhood by appropriate exercise. Faith waxes strong when a Christian attempts a work impossible for man to accomplish unaided by divine power. Doubts vanish when the promises and objects of faith are kept in sight. Love kindles into a glow in the heart, under the practical self-denials of active service for Christ. Hope becomes as an anchor, when the disciple is pointing a sinner to the Lamb of God. His trials and sorrows are forgotten, when he goes out of himself in desire and effort that others may be blessed. His benevolence deepens and expands as he wipes tears from sorrow's cheek, and kindles there the smile of joy. Error can have no hold upon the active Christian, because, doing the will of God, he knows of the doctrine; and being a practical man, he has no time for idle speculation,—no love for dreams. Popular delusions pass by him as the wind, for he keeps on the whole armor of God for actual service, and is strong in the "spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Such a Christian is safe from the allurements of the world, for he has no inclination to mingle in the wasteful and dissipating follies of the "lovers of pleasure." He will not be discontented with his lot in life, for he always has something to live for, and finds a work of interest for Christ, in the sphere marked out for him by Providence. He cannot be censorious and hyper-critical, for he sees defects and mistakes in his own work, and feels constantly the need of the Christian charity of others toward himself. He will be a cheerful, happy Christian; because happiness results from the exercise of the Christian graces, inseperable from active labors for Christ. This laborer can never grow weary of life, or lose his interest in his business, or profession, for his secular employments are all made subservient to his "high calling" as the "servant of the Lord;" and are pursued only as means to an end, so noble, that it enobles all that is necessary for its attainment. Dying, he will rejoice that his life has not been a failure. At the judgment he will be blessed, hearing from his Master's lips, "Well done good and faithful servant."

MINUTES

OF THE

GENERAL CONFERENCE

OF THE

Congregational Churches in Massachusetts,

AT ITS SECOND ANNUAL SESSION,

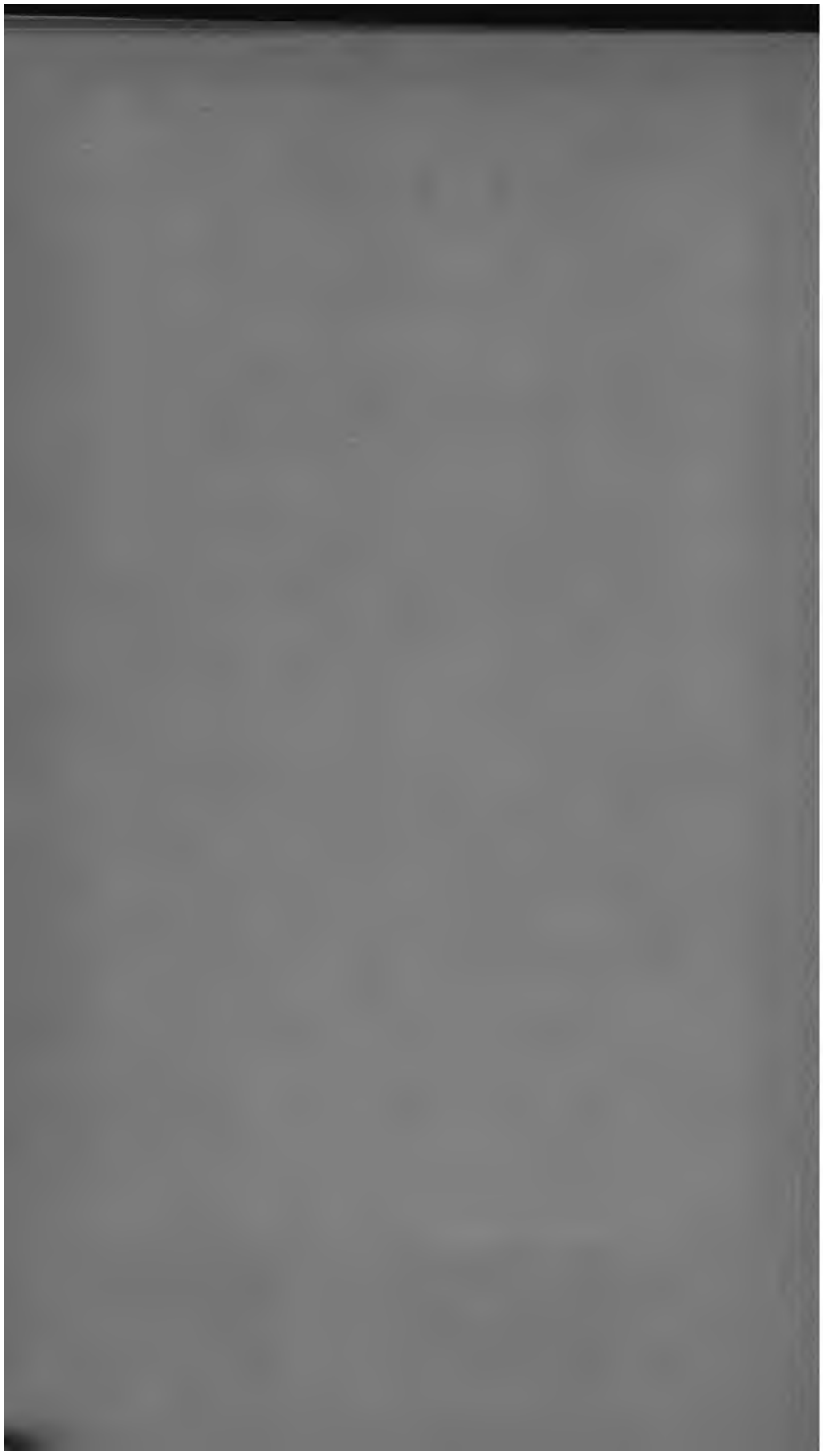
HELD IN THE WHITEFIELD CHURCH, NEWBURYPORT, SEPT. 10–12, 1861.

WITH THE

ESSAYS

WHICH WERE READ BEFORE THE CONFERENCE.

BOSTON:
CROCKER AND BREWSTER.
47 Washington Street.
1861.



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NOTICES.

The meeting of the Conference in 1862 will be held in the Eliot Church, Newton, commencing on Tuesday the 9th of September, at 4 o'clock, P. M., and closing at 4 o'clock, P. M., of the Thursday following.

Rev. Ebenezer Cutler of Worcester, is elected the Preacher of the opening Sermon.

The Barnstable County Conference will furnish the Preacher of the Sermon which is to be delivered before the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

The Delegates will be expected to bring brief written narratives of the state of religion within the bounds of their several Local Conferences.

The General Conference recommends to the Local Conferences that in choosing Delegates, "they select one Clerical and one Lay Delegate from the number of those who attended the preceding year."

OFFICERS.

Recording Secretary.

Rev. JOSHUA W. WELLMAN, Newton.

Statistical Secretary.

Rev. JOHN L. TAYLOR, Andover.

Treasurer.

Bro. Stephen T. Farwell, Cambridge.

Provisional Committee.

Rev. DANIEL L. FURBER, Newton.
Rev. RICHARD B. THURSTON, Waltham.
Rev. JOHN O. MEANS, Roxbury.
Bro. JOSEPH N. BACON, Newton.
Dea. JAMES W. KIMBALL, Boston.

MINUTES.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES OF MASSACHUSETTS commenced its second annual session in the Whitefield Church, Newburyport, on Tuesday, September 10, 1861, at 4 o'clock, P. M. The pastor of the Church, Rev. Samuel J. Spalding, called the meeting to order.

A quorum being present, the Conference was immediately organized by the choice of Rev. Samuel G. Buckingham of Springfield as Moderator.

The Moderator offered prayer.

It being stated by the Recording Secretary that assistance would be needed in keeping the records of the meeting, Rev. Abijah P. Marvin of Winchendon, was chosen Scribe.

Rev. Samuel J. Spalding, Rev. Horace James, and Dea. Samuel W. Stickney, were chosen a Committee of Arrangements.

Rev. Seth Sweetser, D. D., Rev. John O. Means, and Bro. Timothy W. Carter, were chosen a Committee on Nominations.

ROLL OF DELEGATES.

Andover Conference:—

Rev. Benjamin F. Clark, North Chelmsford.
Rev. Calvin E. Stowe, D. D., Andover.
Dea. Samuel W. Stickney, Lowell.
Dea. Benjamin Boardman, Lawrence.
Bro. Edward Buck, Andover.

Barnstable County Conference:—

Rev. Edward W. Noble, Truro.
Rev. George Ford, East Falmouth.
Bro. Elijah Swift, Falmouth.

Berkshire South Conference:—

Rev. Thomas H. Hall, Otis.
Rev. Horace Winslow, Great Barrington.

Brookfield Conference:—

Rev. John Haven, Charlton.
Rev. Jason Morse, Brimfield.
Dea. Samuel M. Lane, Southbridge.
Bro. Lucius J. Knowles, Warren.

Essex North Conference:—

Rev. Daniel T. Fiske, Newburyport.
Rev. James T. McCollom, Bradford.
Bro. Alfred Kittredge, Haverhill.
Bro. Luther Moody, Byfield.

Essex South Conference:—

Rev. Francis V. Tenney, Manchester.
Rev. James M. Bacon, Essex.
Dea. David Choate, Essex.

Franklin County Conference:—

Rev. Perkins K. Clark, South Deerfield.
Rev. Charles Lord, Buckland.
Dea. David W. Childs, Deerfield.

Hampden County Conference:—

Rev. Samuel G. Buckingham, Springfield.
Dea. Charles A. Jessup, Westfield.
Bro. Timothy W. Carter, Chicopee.

Hampshire East Conference:—

Rev. Robert McEwen, D. D., Enfield.
Dea. Alonzo Bardwell, South Hadley.
Dea. Enos D. Smith, Hadley.

Mendon Conference:—

Rev. David Sanford, Medway.
Dea. Everett Stetson, Walpole.

Middlesex South Conference:—

Rev. Erastus Dickinson, Sudbury.
Rev. Elnathan E. Strong, South Natick.
Dea. Edwin Rice, Wayland.
Bro. Marshall S. Scudder, Grantville.

Middlesex Union Conference:—

Rev. Alpha Morton, Acton.
Rev. William A. Mandell, Lunenburg.
Bro. John S. Andrews, Ashby.

Norfolk Conference:—

Rev. Charles W. Wood, North Bridgewater.
Rev. James H. Means, Dorchester.
Bro. Moses French, East Randolph.

Old Colony Conference:—

Rev. William L. Parsons, Mattapoisett.
Bro. Alfred Wood, Middleboro'.
Bro. Abner J. Phipps, New Bedford.

Pilgrim Conference:—

Rev. Ebenezer Alden, Jr., Marshfield.
Bro. David P. Hatch, Marshfield.

Salem Missionary Union:—

Rev. Jotham B. Sewall, Lynn.
Bro. Richard P. Waters, Beverly.

Suffolk North Conference:—

Rev. Joseph A. Copp, D. D., Chelsea.
Bro. Moses H. Sargent, Somerville.
Dea. Eliab P. Mackintyre, Charlestown.
Dea. James W. Kimball, Boston.

Suffolk South Conference:—

Rev. John O. Means, Roxbury.
Rev. Edwin B. Webb, Boston.
Dea. Charles Scudder, Boston.
Bro. Francis D. Ellis, West Roxbury.

Taunton and Vicinity Conference:—

Rev. Constantine Blodgett, D. D., Pawtucket.
Dea. Joseph Brown, Seekonk.

Woburn Conference:—

Rev. Daniel R. Cady, West Cambridge.
Rev. Jesse G. D. Stearns, Billerica.
Dea. Phineas W. Chamberlin, Bedford.
Bro. Lucius B. Horton, West Cambridge.

Worcester Central Conference:—

Rev. Seth Sweetser, D. D., Worcester.
Rev. Horace James, Worcester.
Bro. Lucius S. Alden, Shrewsbury.
Bro. Harding P. Woods, Barre.

Worcester North Conference:—

Rev. Abijah P. Marvin, Winchendon.
Dea. Ebenezer Butler, Winchendon.
Dea. William P. Ellis, Ashburnham.

Worcester South Conference:—

Rev. George Lyman, Sutton.
Rev. Lewis F. Clark, Whitinsville.
Dea. William C. Capron, Uxbridge.
Dea. Tyrus March, Millbury.
Bro. William F. Slocum, Grafton.

After a short season spent in devotional exercises, the Conference adjourned to meet at 7½ o'clock in the evening, in the Prospect Street Church.

Tuesday evening, 7½ o'clock. The Conference assembled at the place appointed. After devotional exercises, conducted by Rev. Constantine Blodgett, D. D., of Pawtucket, a Sermon was preached by Rev. Edward N. Kirk, D. D., of Boston, from the following Scripture, "For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." John vi. 33.

SECOND DAY.

Wednesday, Sept. 11. The Conference resumed its session at 9 o'clock, A. M., in the Whitefield Church, and after the calling of the Roll, engaged in devotional services for one hour.

The Rev. George F. Magoun, of Lyons, Iowa, made a fraternal address to the Conference.

FIRST ESSAY.

Rev. Thomas Laurie of West Roxbury, then read an Essay on the "Christian view of the nature and range of efficacious prayer."

On motion of Rev. Horace James, voted, that speakers upon the subjects of the Essays, be limited to five minutes.

The discussion on the subject of the Essay was participated in by Dea. Edwin Rice, Rev. John D. Potter, Rev. George Trask, Rev. Elbridge G. Little, Rev. Calvin E. Stowe, D. D., Rev. Benjamin C. Chase, Rev. Justin Perkins, D. D., of Nestorian Mission, Rev. John O. Means, Bro. Zebulon Pratt, and Rev. Edward N. Kirk, D. D.

This discussion was interspersed with singing, and also with prayer by Rev. Daniel R. Cady and Rev. George Lyman.

APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES.

At 11¾ o'clock, the Conference attended to business. The Moderator designated the following Committees, and they were elected:

Committee on the State of the Country,—Rev. Joseph A. Copp, D. D., Rev. James T. McCollom, and Bro. Timothy W. Carter.

Committee on the State of Religion,—Rev. Constantine Blodgett, D. D., Rev. Calvin E. Stowe, D. D., and Dea. James W. Kimball.

Committee on Finance,—Rev. Joshua W. Wellman, Dea. Charles Scudder, and Bro. Richard P. Waters.

The Constitution and By-Laws of the Conference were read by the Recording Secretary.

RESIGNATION OF OFFICERS.

A letter from Rev. George Moore, the Statistical Secretary, was read, stating that, owing to his removal from the State, he wished to resign his office.

Dea. William Hyde, Treasurer, also tendered his resignation by letter, on account of his inconvenient location.

Their resignations were accepted.

TREASURER'S REPORT.

On motion of Rev. Samuel J. Spalding, the Report of the Treasurer was assigned to Dea. Charles Scudder, as auditing Committee.

RECOMMENDATION TO LOCAL CONFERENCES.

Voted, To recommend to the Local Conferences, that in choosing Delegates to the General Conference, they select one Clerical and one Lay Delegate from the number of those who attended the preceding year.

Adjourned to meet at 2 o'clock, P. M.

Wednesday afternoon. The Conference met at 2 o'clock, and the meeting was opened with prayer, by Dea. Tyrus March. An hour was then given to devotional exercises.

SECOND ESSAY.

Rev. Horace James then read an Essay on the question, "What are the duties of the Church, and of individual Christians, in training young men for the ministry?"

Remarks were made upon the subject of the Essay by Rev. Seth Sweetser, D. D., Rev. Increase N. Tarbox, and Rev. Calvin E. Stowe, D. D.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON HOME EVANGELIZATION.

The Committee on "Home Evangelization," appointed at the last annual meeting, presented their report in four parts.

Owing to the great length of the report, the first and second parts of it only were read this afternoon, the first by Rev. Christopher Cushing of North Brookfield, and the second by Rev. Horace James of Worcester.

STATISTICS.

The Statistics of Benevolence, collected by the Statistical Secretary, were referred to a Committee consisting of Rev. Robert McEwen, D. D., Rev. Daniel T. Fiske, and Dea. Charles Scudder.

COMMITTEE FROM THE GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF MASSACHUSETTS.

A Committee from the General Association of Massachusetts came before the Conference, with a written document, relating to a union of the

General Association of Massachusetts," and the "General Conference of the Congregational Churches of Massachusetts," and containing a request that the Conference appoint a Committee to confer with them in reference to this subject.

Adjourned to meet at 7½ o'clock.

Wednesday evening. The Conference assembled at the appointed time, and listened to a brief address on Missions, by Rev. Justin Perkins, D. D., of the Nestorian Mission.

THIRD ESSAY.

An Essay was then read, by Rev. Edmund K. Alden of South Boston, on "The best method of developing the working power of young Christians." This subject was then discussed by Rev. Horace Winslow, Rev. Jotham B. Sewall, Bro. Moses H. Sargent, Dea. Benjamin Boardman, Bro. Woodbury of Plymouth, Rev. John D. Potter, Rev. Joshua W. Wellman, Rev. Edwin B. Webb, and Rev. Edward P. Hammond.

After prayer by Rev. Isaac P. Langworthy, the Conference adjourned to meet at 8 o'clock the next morning.

THIRD DAY.

Thursday morning, 8 o'clock. The Conference held a business meeting, between the hours of 8 and 9.

UNION OF THE GENERAL ASSOCIATION WITH THE GENERAL CONFERENCE.

The subject of a union of the General Association with the General Conference of Churches, submitted by a Committee of the former body, came up, and the Conference voted to appoint a Committee to confer with the Committee of the General Association upon the subject, and to report to this body next year.

FINANCE.

The Treasurer's Report, was reported back by the Auditor, as correctly cast and properly vouched.

The Committee on Finance reported that the expenditures of the coming year require the assessment of one dollar on each Church con-

nected with this Conference, to be paid to the Treasurers of the Local Conferences, and to be remitted by them to the Treasurer of the General Conference.

Voted, To accept the report, and to adopt its recommendation.

REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE COUNTRY.

The Committee on the State of the Country, made the following report which was unanimously adopted.

The existing civil war in which the American people are unhappily involved, is one which has been forced upon the Government of the United States by the insurrection and rebellion of the people of certain Southern States against constitutional liberty and the sovereignty of the Republic; and is one which, waged without cause or justification, is a crime alike against government, religion and humanity.

Considering the origin and object of this civil strife, precipitated upon us by our misguided Southern brethren, and the manner of its prosecution by them, no other course is left to the people of the loyal States, than firmly to stand by the Government and nationality, at whatever cost, until the rebellion is put down, and the Constitution and the laws restored in their integrity.

While we believe the war to be the work of wicked rebellion, we still recognize the hand of God in it, inflicting just and deserved judgment on us all for our sins, social, civil and personal. We therefore welcome as wise and timely the proclamation of the President of the United States, appointing a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer. We would earnestly recommend to all our churches and people throughout the Commonwealth, its solemn and Christian observance. In view of the trying exigency in our affairs which has called for such a day, we further recommend that our churches and people anticipate the approaching solemnity by special religious preparation, searchings of heart before God and re-dedication to His service; that the time appointed may be a day of the right hand of the Most High; that He may hear the cry of His saints: pour out His Holy Spirit abundantly; sanctify to the land our national affliction: open the way in his providence for the deliverance of all that are in bondage: make the nation in fact what it is in theory, a nation of freemen: and grant us union and peace in perpetuity.

The General Conference would take this occasion to express, in decided but respectful terms, its regret at the frequent desecration of the holy Sabbath, by those in the service of the Government. It would respectfully appeal to our civil and military authorities, State and National, in this behalf, and urge upon them, that except in cases of necessity, the lawful rest and religious worship of the Lord's day be observed by our army and navy. The Conference is happy to say that in regard to this important subject, it has nothing to ask or desire more than has been published to the army in a late

general order, by that Christian patriot and soldier, Major General McClellan, of the army of the Potomac.

COMMITTEE TO CONFER WITH THE COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSOCIATION.

Voted, That the Committee upon the union of the General Conference and the General Association be constituted as follows: Rev. Charles W. Wood, Rev. Abijah P. Marvin, Rev. Joseph Vaill, D. D., Hon. Linus Child, and Dea. Andrew L. Porter.

The Minutes were read and approved.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

On recommendation by the Committee on Nominations, Rev. John L. Taylor of Andover, was chosen Statistical Secretary; and Bro. Stephen T. Farwell of Cambridge, was chosen Treasurer.

THE PREACHER OF THE SERMON BEFORE THE LORD'S SUPPER.

A letter was received from Rev. Austin Phelps, D. D., of Andover, expressing a deep interest in the General Conference, and regretting that ill health compelled him to decline the appointment made by the Andover Conference, to preach the Sermon before the Lord's Supper, at this session of the General Conference.

The Conference was informed that Rev. Calvin E. Stowe, D. D., was his substitute.

The hour, between 9 and 10 o'clock, was devoted to religious exercises. Remarks appropriate to the occasion, and the times in which we live, were made by the Moderator; also by Rev. Constantine Blodgett, D. D., and Rev. George Trask.

Prayers were offered by Rev. Wakefield Gale, and Rev. Benjamin F. Clark.

PLACE OF MEETING IN 1862.

Voted, That the next annual meeting be held in the Eliot Church, in Newton.

PREACHER FOR 1862.

Voted, That the Rev. Ebenezer Cutler of Worcester, be invited to preach the opening Sermon at the next annual meeting of the Conference.

PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE.

The following is the Provisional Committee chosen for the ensuing year, viz. Rev. Daniel L. Furber, Rev. Richard B. Thurston, Rev. John O. Means, Bro. Joseph N. Bacon, and Dea. James W. Kimball.

PUBLISHING COMMITTEE.

Rev. Joshua W. Wellman, Rev. Daniel R. Cady, and Bro. William H. Wardwell, were appointed a Committee of Publication.

NARRATIVE OF THE STATE OF RELIGION.

Rev. Constantine Blodgett, D. D., read the Narrative of the State of Religion in the Churches.

RECOMMENDATION TO FUTURE DELEGATES.

On motion of Rev. Seth Sweetser, D. D.,

Voted, That the Delegates hereafter appointed, be requested to prepare a Narrative of the State of Religion within the bounds of their several Local Conferences, to be presented to the meeting of the General Conference, as provided for by the Constitution.

FINANCE.

Voted, That the Recording Secretary be authorized to notify the Scribes or Treasurers of the several Local Conferences, of the assessment of one dollar upon each church, and to request those officers to collect the same immediately, and forward it to the Treasurer of the General Conference.

VOTES OF THANKS.

On motion of Rev. Abijah P. Marvin,

Voted, That we tender to the citizens of Newburyport and vicinity, our grateful acknowledgments for that generous hospitality and Christian kindness, which have contributed to make our visit here so pleasant and memorable.

Voted, To tender the thanks of this Conference to the officers of the Eastern, and the Boston and Maine, Railroads, for their liberality in furnishing return tickets to all members who passed over their roads.

CONTINUATION OF THE REPORT ON HOME EVANGELIZATION.

The reading of the report on "Home Evangelization" was resumed, the third part being read by Bro. Nathan Allen, M. D., of Lowell, and the fourth part by Rev. Henry M. Parsons of Springfield.

The report was accepted.

The Committee also reported a series of Resolutions, the following of which were adopted:

RESOLUTIONS REPORTED BY THE COMMITTEE ON HOME EVANGELIZATION, AND ADOPTED BY THE CONFERENCE.

Resolved, 1. That we see nothing in the history of Congregationalism in Massachusetts which ought to weaken our faith in either the soundness of its essential principles, or its practical adaptation to evangelize the whole community, but much, on the contrary, to confirm us in vigorously upholding it, as being the simplest, freest and most scriptural church polity in existence.

Resolved, 2. That the theory and history of Congregationalism alike point to the *local Church*, as the best possible instrument with which to christianize the community; and that for the relief of all religious destitutions within the State we must depend chiefly upon the awakened and well directed energies of the churches.

Resolved, 3. That we recognize the voluntary societies and organizations, which have sprung up under the favor of the denomination, and are now its chosen organs, as being most important and useful auxiliaries of the churches, and, as such, worthy of their confidence and support.

Resolved, 4. That in order to obtain reliable facts respecting the religious destitutions and wants of the community, we recommend to each Local Conference, that they should take measures to fill out and return to a Committee of this body, before its next annual meeting, the following schedule:—Name of Town; Population; No. of Churches, and their denomination; No. of sittings in each place of worship; Average attendance at each place of worship; No. of families all the members of which habitually neglect the sanctuary; No. of Church members connected with the Congregational Sabbath School.

Resolved, 5. That we recommend to each Church in the Commonwealth, that it should maintain a stated monthly prayer meeting, which shall be called the "*Home Prayer Meeting*," and be devoted to the interests of Home Evangelization, in accordance with a plan published in the "Home Missionary" for November, 1860.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON STATISTICS.

The Committee on the Statistics of Benevolence reported, that, owing to the unavoidable incompleteness of the returns from the churches, and the impracticability of securing at this late date the full statistics, we advise that the printing in this department be omitted in the present instance. The report was adopted.

COMMITTEE TO PROCURE STATISTICS FOR THE ENSUING YEAR.

The Committee to whom the Statistics, referred to in the 4th of the above resolutions, are to be returned, is composed as follows, viz. Rev. Isaac P. Langworthy, Rev. Christopher Cushing, Rev. Samuel J. Spalding, Bro. Nathan Allen, and Bro. Edward Buck.

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE PUBLISHING COMMITTEE.

Voted, That the Publishing Committee be authorized to print the Minutes of the meeting, and the Narrative of the State of Religion, with such portions of the Essays presented, as may, in their judgment be expedient.

CLOSING REMARKS.

Remarks appropriate to the close of the meeting of the Conference were then made by the Moderator. And the Rev. Randolph Campbell, Pastor of the Prospect Street Church, Newburyport, made a tender address, in response to the vote of thanks to the families of the place for their hospitality.

The Minutes were read and approved.

Voted, That after the Communion services, in the afternoon, the Conference be adjourned, *sine die*.

Thursday, P. M. The Conference assembled at 2 o'clock, in the First Presbyterian Church, to observe the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The devotional exercises preceding the Sermon, were conducted by Rev. Robert McEwen, D. D.

The Sermon was preached by Rev. Calvin E. Stowe, D. D., and was founded upon the Scripture, "The Word was God." John i. 1.

The services at the Lord's Table were conducted by Rev. Joseph A. Copp, D. D., and Rev. John O. Means. After which, in accordance with a previous vote, the Conference was adjourned, *sine die*.

SAMUEL G. BUCKINGHAM, *Moderator.*

ABIJAH P. MARVIN, *Scribe.*

A true copy of the Minutes.

Attest, JOSHUA W. WELLMAN,
Recording Secretary.

CONSTITUTION.

1. This body shall be called the GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES IN MASSACHUSETTS.

2. The object of this Conference is to secure Christian union, fellowship and intercourse among the churches; to promote spirituality; incite to a more elevated piety, and stimulate Christians to greater activity and efficiency in advancing the Redeemer's kingdom.

3. This Conference shall, under no circumstances, exercise ecclesiastical authority, or interfere with the government or discipline of the churches, or consent to hear appeals, or give advice in ecclesiastical causes of any kind.

4. Each Local Conference, composed of evangelical Congregational Churches within the State, may appoint five delegates to attend the annual meeting of the Conference, two of whom shall be pastors of churches, and three lay members.

5. The officers of the Conference shall be a Moderator, a Recording Secretary, a Statistical Secretary, and a Treasurer.

6. The Moderator shall be chosen by ballot from among the delegates present, and shall preside during the meeting for which he is chosen.

7. The Secretaries and Treasurer shall be chosen by ballot, and continue in office three years.

8. The Recording Secretary shall keep a fair record of the doings of each meeting, in a book to be kept for that purpose, which shall be transmitted to his successor in office.

9. The Statistical Secretary shall collect and arrange such statistics as the Conference may order; shall distribute all documents received for the use of the Conference, or printed by them, and shall preserve a copy of all the publications of the Conference.

10. The Treasurer shall receive all money raised for the use of the Conference; disburse the same as directed, and present an annual report, audited as the Conference may direct.

11. Any ordained pastor or member of a Congregational Church within the bounds of the State, shall be eligible to the offices of Secretary, Statistical Secretary and Treasurer.

12. The Conference may receive delegates from other State evangelical religious bodies, representing Congregational Churches, who shall be con-

sidered honorary members, and be admitted to the privilege of participating in the deliberations of the meeting, but shall not be allowed to vote; and the Conference may reciprocate the courtesy by appointing delegates to such bodies.

13. Twenty-five regularly appointed delegates shall constitute a quorum.

14. The Conference shall hold an annual meeting on the second Tuesday in September, at such place as shall be designated, to commence at four o'clock, or other more convenient hour, in the afternoon, and to close at four o'clock in the afternoon of the Thursday following.

15. A sermon shall be preached on the evening of the first day of the meeting, and another, adapted to the occasion, on the afternoon of the last day, to be followed by the Lord's Supper, to be administered generally without remarks.

16. Brief narratives of the state of religion within the bounds of local Conferences, shall be presented in writing to a Committee appointed to receive them, which shall be embodied in a report and read by the Committee, at such time as the Conference may appoint.

17. Other services of the Conference shall consist of devotional exercises, addresses and discussions upon subjects of practical religious interest, together with the objects of benevolent enterprise, sustained by the churches, to be provided for, and arranged as shall be laid down in the By-Laws.

18. The Conferences shall establish By-Laws and Rules of Order for the regulation of its business, which shall be adopted by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any annual meeting.

19. Any proposition to alter or amend a By-Law shall be made at the annual meeting previous to the one at which it is acted upon.

20. Any article of this Constitution may be altered or amended by a two-thirds vote, at any annual meeting, provided, that the proposition is made at any previous annual meeting, excepting that *article third* shall be held unalterable.

BY-LAWS.

1. At the appointed hour of meeting, the Pastor of the Church where the meeting is held shall call to order; the certificates of delegates shall be immediately presented to the Recording Secretary, and a quorum being declared present, a Moderator shall be chosen.

2. The Moderator shall open the meeting with devotional exercises, and at the opening of each subsequent session, shall appoint some person to offer prayer.

3. A Committee of three shall be appointed to act as a Committee of Arrangements.

4. At each meeting, a Provisional Committee of five persons, shall be appointed to arrange the schedule for the subsequent meeting; to designate the place, and to nominate a preacher, for the opening sermon.

5. The preacher of the sermon before the communion, shall be chosen by the local Conferences, in alphabetical order.

6. In order to separate the business from the religious services, special times shall be designated, at which all business of the Conference shall be transacted.

7. Whenever it shall appear to the Committee appointed to embody the narratives of the state of religion, that the religious condition within any local Conferences justifies a more detailed recital, a delegate from every such Conference may make verbal statements to the meeting, under the direction of the Committee.

8. The Conference shall determine, by vote, what objects of Christian benevolence may from time to time be presented, and the particular objects to be presented at any meeting, shall be determined by the Provisional Committee.

9. The Constitution and By-Laws shall be read near the opening of the session, on the second day.

10. When a report is made, the question shall be, "Shall the report be accepted?" If resolutions are appended, the question may be divided at the request of any member, and the vote taken separately on accepting the report, and on accepting the resolutions.

11. The motion for "the previous question," shall be put without debate, and if carried, the main question shall be immediately put.

12. The Conference shall observe the usual rules of order in deliberative bodies, in all cases where it has no special rule of its own.

13. Before adjournment, the minutes of the meeting shall be read for approval.

REPORT ON THE STATE OF RELIGION

IN THE CHURCHES CONNECTED WITH THE CONFERENCE.

The Reports from the Local Conferences enable the Committee to make only general statements on this subject so important and so vital to the objects of the General Conference. In consideration of the recent organization of the Conference, the Committee are not disposed to speak of the failure of District Conferences to send *in* written reports of the State of Religion, believing that the failures of this year will not occur again. We trust all the Conferences will be fully reported at the next meeting of this Body.

We rejoice to draw from the reports the conclusion that our churches are in a general condition of order and prosperity, and that they are efficiently employing the varied means of grace which they have so long enjoyed. We have no intelligence of any prevailing defection from our faith or order, or of any devisive or agitating movements in our churches.

We see reason also to conclude, that the heavy pressure upon all hearts, from the state of the Nation, is operating, under the gracious power of the Spirit to bring Christians into a deeper and more living sympathy with each other, and into a united waiting upon God for his saving interposition. The prevailing spirit of Christian patriotism we hope may be prophetic of an equally prevailing spirit of prayer for the conversion of sinners, and the edification of the churches.

It is not granted us to report a large number of revivals, of such power, as have marked many former years. Still some delightful seasons of refreshing have been granted in different portions of the State, indicating that our God has not forgotten to be gracious, and encouraging all "to bring all the tithes into his store house."

In Royalston, First Church, a work of grace has been enjoyed in which forty have been brought to rejoice in the hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

Sabbath Schools, it is believed, have never been in a more prosperous condition than at the present time. As their blessed fruits are seen to mature from year to year, pastors and people more highly prize them, as a means of Christian culture, approved of God, and ordained to act an illustrious part in home evangelization, and in the developement of the kingdom of Christ throughout the earth. The signs of coming spiritual good of which some of the reports speak, may be found in connection with these nurseries of the Church. In them, in an interesting sense, is the hiding of our power for future years.

We take pleasure in reporting a very encouraging inflowing of funds to the treasuries of some of our Benevolent Evangelizing Societies. These Societies give evidence of having taken deep hold upon the hearts of our Christian people, and we cannot doubt will continue to receive proofs of the intelligent and steadfast confidence of increasing numbers of our Church members. It was no temporary alliance which was of old formed between our churches and the great Missionary enterprise. Their ear is yet open to the great command of their ascending Lord.

Our churches have been called to mourn the removal by death of some of the fathers and brethren in the ministry since the last Conference. The prophets do not live forever. This is not the place for any thing like a fitting memorial of such men as Cobb of Taunton, Clarke of West Newton, Dimmick of Newburyport, Kimball of Oakham, and others, who have been called to their account and their reward during the Conference year. Their "record is on high," with that of the many members of these churches, who have ceased from their earthly service during the same time. May we who survive them be quickened to new heavenliness of spirit, and new fidelity in the service of our common Lord.

The year is before us, big with interest to our country, our churches, the nations, and the universal kingdom of Christ upon the earth. May the Spirit descend to prepare us for its duties and amazing developements, to the glory of his own most holy name, who hath called us into his kingdom.

C. Blodgett,
C. E. Stowe,
J. W. Kimball,
Committee.

ESSAY.—No. 1.

BY REV. THOMAS LAURIE, WEST ROXBURY.

THE SCRIPTURE VIEW OF THE NATURE AND RANGE OF EFFICACIOUS PRAYER.

I have been requested to direct your thoughts, on the present occasion, to *The Scripture view of the nature and range of efficacious prayer.*

This is a pleasant duty, for it is always a privilege to come to the word which liveth and abideth forever, and hear what God the Lord will speak, especially on a topic so intimately connected with spiritual life. At the same time it is not easy; for in this age, when men are so eager after striking novelties, it may be difficult to secure attention to truth so simple and so trite. Moreover I am not quite sure that I shall present precisely that view of the subject which was in your minds when you assigned the theme.

Before proceeding to discuss it, there is perhaps one expression in it which requires a little notice. It speaks of *efficacious* prayer, but is there such a thing as *inefficacious* prayer? One prayer may avail more and another less, but is there any of which we may say it is of no efficacy? The Saviour saith, "*Every one* that asketh receiveth," and repeats the same truth over and over in different forms, as though it was very important, and should never be forgotten. He affirms that—not a select circle among those that pray—but *every one* who prays finds his prayer efficacious. And so it is written again, "*Whosoever* shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Surely if this be true, no petition is ever offered to God in vain. He himself assures us, that he never said to any of the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain. The prayers which God declares he will not hear, are not those slightly imperfect, or very deficient, but those which are no prayers at all. The idea of a spiritual aristocracy among the people of God, who monopolize the most of his favor, and leave only the crumbs which fall from their table for ordinary Christians, is alike contrary to Scripture and dishonorable to God. The Bible distinguishes between those who call

upon God, and those who do not, but not between those that do; though among them it is true that he who soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly, and bountiful sowing is followed by a bountiful harvest. Set it down then among the immovable foundations that shall never be disturbed, though of all that is above ground not one stone is left upon another, that all prayer is efficacious. That old stanza is true, as well as full of comfort, which says,

> "God frees the souls condemned to death,
> Nor, when his saints complain,
> Shall it be said that praying breath
> Was ever spent in vain."

Any other doctrine would rob the poor in spirit of Christ's blessing, for they would at once conclude that their prayers were more worthless than all others, while the proud in heart would be inordinately puffed up in their own esteem. The truth as it is in Jesus never produces effects like these. Not so does Christ deal out his blessing.

But if all prayer is efficacious, it is important to know what is prayer. It is not knowledge acquired by the apprehension of logical statements, but it is the natural activity of a heart that longs for God. It is God the Spirit in us, sweetly drawing us to communion with the Father and with his son Jesus Christ.

The Bible speaks of it as a "coming unto God," a "seeking God," a "looking unto him," a "calling on his name," a "lifting up of the soul unto God." There is something very sweet in this last view. Just as a mother holds up her child to receive the blessing of her aged parent, or the seal of the covenant at the baptismal font, so in prayer do we lift up our souls unto God, that he may bestow on them the gift of his salvation. What petition presents us with so vivid a picture of prayer, as a sinner coming to God with the request, "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation."

The essential idea of prayer is that of "coming unto" or "seeking" God. Not a *going* unto God, as though he were far off, and we needed to explore a wide region or travel to an unknown distance; no, he is as near to us as we are to ourselves. In him we live and move and have our being. Perhaps one of the most common ideas of the awakened is to go out after a distant God. But Christ tells us, the Prodigal first came to himself; that is, woke up to his guilt and misery, and then not *went*, but *came* to his father; not traversing unknown paths, but retracing the way that led him away from home. Our arising to go to our Father, is still a *coming*. Till we thus come to him, we do not

pray; and having begun, we can only draw nearer and seek him yet again, as by the sense of inward want he draws us to himself.

I present this simple Bible view of prayer, the rather as inquirers are so often bewildered by a multitude and variety of directions how to pray. "You must feel thus and not so; you must do this, that, and the other thing." So many conditions to be fulfilled, and so many qualifications to be possessed that the contrite sinner sinks down overwhelmed and dismayed. The result too often is, that God is lost sight of in the multitude of his thoughts, "How am I to come?" and instead of coming to God at all, the sinner wanders in a labyrinth of attempts to help himself. Still let no one think that it is a matter of indifference whether prayer be sincere, fervent, accompanied by true repentance, and offered in the name of Jesus. But do we not mislead inquirers and sometimes confuse ourselves by losing sight of the simplicity of its essential nature?

Many of these directions about prayer, are as if you should tell the man whom you were sending up the mountain side, "Now when you get to such a place, you must have an elevation of feeling; you must have a disposition to sing or shout aloud among the rocky crags." Why if the man ever reaches that place, the bracing mountain air will produce all this without your requiring it. It will be the natural and inevitable consequence of his breathing so pure an atmosphere,—whereas should he creep along the level plain, not all your exhortations could secure the result.

The tendency of such teaching is to what good John Bunyan calls Legality; and the Bible, our own righteousness, as opposed to the righteousness of God. It fills the mind with thoughts of prayer, as our act, and the amount of goodness in it; whereas its efficacy does not depend at all on him who prays, but on the grace of him to whom we pray. It is as if a man, applying to a doctor, should weary himself with thinking what dress he should wear, and how he should introduce the subject of his sickness, or if confined to his bed, in what position he should lie, and how the chairs should be placed around the room, instead of turning to the physician who stands waiting only for the sufferer to express a desire for his services.

Let this illustration lead us to another view of the nature of prayer. The mode of our application to a physician is of small moment, because the result depends not on that, but on his ability to help us. So the efficacy of prayer does not depend on the goodness of our petitions, but on the goodness of him to whom we pray. If in prayer, man is the sole agent, or even the primary and principal agent, let us magnify him ac-

cordingly. If in prayer, man alone is active, and God a mere passive object of this human activity, let us say so with all plainness. But if God be the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, let us see to it that in all our views of prayer, we render unto God the glory due to his great name.

Indeed so long as we put man in the foreground in this matter, prayer is absolutely incomprehensible. Where shall I go to find an omnipresent God, everywhere present, but nowhere visible? How can I add to the information of Omniscience? In what way can I change the feelings or purposes of the immutable? How can I, a worm of the dust, attract the attention of him who manages, not merely the affairs of nations or of worlds, but of the universe itself? What motive can I present that will influence the most high God? All this repels me as a *creature;* but as a *sinner*, I am wholly cut off from all access to God. There is a gulf between me and God, not only impassable to-day, but were I to spend eternity in trying to go round it, I should only be removing to a greater distance from the object of my search. I might as well try to hew out steps in the air and climb to heaven in this mortal flesh. If then prayer is to be a movement of mine toward God, my doom is sealed. All created reason could not point out the first step toward a successful issue.

But if, on the other hand, there be a movement of the Most High toward me; if the invisible be pleased to reveal himself; if he chooses to cross the gulf from his side and come over to me; if of his own accord he stoops down and inclines his ear to hear me; if he instructs me how to reach his heart, and furnishes me with everything requisite to that end; if he makes prayer not an endeavor of mine to move him, but an arrangement of his to bless me, dependent for success not on anything in me worthy of so great a favor, but solely on his own loving kindness, then prayer ceases to be an enigma. I can begin to understand it. But the moment I lose sight of the fact, that it is a way opened up by God for me; in which his hand leads and his right hand upholds me,—the goal reached not by my running, but through his mercy,—his working for me and his working in me,—I am plunged headlong again in darkness and despair.

If prayer be primarily a movement of the creature toward God, then must we comprehend the whole process in all its bearings, before we can trust ourselves to hope for success. For how can I expect a good result of a work of my own performed in the dark. Call on me to leap across a rocky chasm in the darkness of midnight, when life hangs on the issue, but do not call on me to pray to God, if success depends on

the efficiency of my own act, without answering to my satisfaction every question I can raise as to the manner of attainment. I must comprehend the whole matter. I must see the entire connection between my act and the final result, along the whole line of its operation, ere my heart can be at rest.

But if prayer be a method God employs to bless me, then even if I cannot see how this can be, or that can follow, no matter. God comprehends his own acts; he knows what he does and how he does, and in what way he shall attain the result; and his attaining it does not at all depend on my comprehension of his doings. I can safely trust him who knows the end from the beginning,—with whom nothing is impossible, and whose purposes of mercy never change.

But while it is enough for faith simply to know that God has thus undertaken to confer blessing upon us, he has been pleased to reveal a great deal more for our comfort and spiritual joy.

We have already seen that prayer is a *coming* to God. Now lest we should be troubled at all by the thought, how can access to another Being be called coming and not going? the answer is provided in the fact that it is access to God in Christ, who is *Immanuel, God with us.* So that we need not say, "Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down. Or who shall descend into the abyss? that is, bring up Christ again from the dead." For he dwelleth in us and we in him. Yea "we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."

The same fact answers the question, How can we approach him who is a consuming fire? How can the sinner come into the presence of a holy God? is a question philosophy might agitate forever, and never settle, but the name of Jesus makes all plain.

God has taken the matter into his own hands. It involves questions we cannot answer; it requires a basis we cannot furnish. But he has undertaken it, and we need to doubt no more. Yet lest we should find it hard to exercise a quiet confidence without some insight into the method of accomplishment, he points us to Jesus Christ and him crucified, and *He* comes to us with his, "If ye shall ask anything in my name I will do it." So whatever hard question comes up to beat us back from prayer, Christ is our complete and all-sufficient answer. Are we unworthy to come before God? True, but "Christ is made unto us righteousness." Is it suggested, that the cry of a creature can never avail to move the mind of the Most High? Yes if we were alone. But if we "are the temple of the Holy Ghost," and "*He* maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered," it is not hard to believe that God will hear himself, and answer the petition of his own

inditing. But is it objected that still our prayers are imperfect in so far as they are ours? True, but the perfection of the Atonement Christ made for us, not the perfection of our prayers, is the foundation God himself has laid for the answer.

Prayer may seem a very simple thing to those who never tried to pray. But the more we search into it, the more are we amazed at the wonders of divine wisdom and the riches of divine grace revealed in the wonderful arrangements by the which we draw near to God. They involve the combined action of Father, Son and Holy Ghost from the eternity of the past; and it is not too much to say that they will furnish themes for the delighted study of holy beings through the eternity to come.

The efficacy of prayer then depends wholly on God. Man is the receiver of grace to pray, as well as of blessing in answer to prayer. God in Christ is the inexhaustible fountain of all—both in the offering of prayer and in its answer. Of him and to him and through him is the whole. As good Archbishop Leighton says of the work of Grace in the heart, in connection with election on the one side and ultimate salvation on the other: "These two links of the chain are up in heaven in God's own hand, but this middle one is let down to earth in the hearts of his children, and they laying hold on it, have sure hold on the other two, for no power can sever them." So may we say the same of the human act of prayer, viewed in connection with the preparation made for it in Christ, and the answer given to it through the same Redeemer. The true nature of prayer is thus a manifestation of grace in Christ. It is not procuring on our part, so much as giving on God's part, and we can prove the fulness of the power of prayer only as we are rooted and grounded in that truth, and pray in the Spirit through the Son to the Father, with our hearts under the quickening influence of this view of divine grace.

So much for the nature of prayer. A word and but a word as to its range. By this I suppose is intended the sphere of its operation. This includes every thing needful for our temporal or eternal welfare; all that Christ has purchased for us by his blood, and all that God bestows upon us in him. Now Jesus Christ is the Creator of our bodies, as well as the Redeemer of our souls. He appoints all the circumstances of our earthly lot, as well as of our heavenly inheritance. He is as truly conversant with the little things of every day life, as with our redemption from sin and hell. Said Mary Lyon to me, not long before her last sickness, "There are a thousand little things that perplex me every day,—questions so insignificant I should be

ashamed to mention them to an earthly friend,—but I can carry them all to Christ, and never do I do this without finding a kind reception and a gracious relief."

But while the range of prayer is so extensive, there is one condition that runs through the whole. I do not say it is indispensable, for that might convey the idea of constraint by force, whereas every one taught of God to pray, spontaneously says in reference to everything, "*Not* as *I* will, but as *thou* wilt." The child of God would not be willing to pray, if God answered every petition precisely as he asked it. For thus he would say, I should lose the blessedness of having God arrange everything for me, and exchange the choice of his infinite wisdom and love for my own blind and foolish preferences. Rather than do that, I would leave everything to his gracious ordering, without any special request whatever. In asking for mercy, the Christian loves to leave it absolutely with the Lord, when, how and in what degree, that mercy shall be granted. He delights to have God determine the time and the measure of his spiritual comfort. And while God never leaves a prayer for spiritual good unanswered, he generally bestows it in ways and through instrumentalities least expected. And if it be so in spiritual things, much more is this true of all that relates to the present life. In these the Christian could think of no greater curse, than to have God give to him precisely what he should ask, and remove from him whatever he should pray to have taken away. In all such things we can feel safe only as we have God to choose for us, sending very often that which above all others is the object of our dread, and withholding that which more than every thing else we should have loved to receive.

The range of prayer then is wide. It extends to all things. But while the pious heart feels free to state its desires and fears with reference to particular events, it finds rest only as in every thing it adds, "Nevertheless, Thy will not mine be done. The Christian prays earnestly for a prosperous voyage, and a safe arrival at the haven of rest. He knows that God will hear this prayer, but he also knows that to secure this, he must give up helm and quarter-deck to Jesus Christ, both this moment and all through the voyage. Any feeling inconsistent with that, he would abhor, as most wicked mutiny and rebellion against his chosen Lord.

ESSAY.—No. 2.

BY REV. HORACE JAMES, WORCESTER.

WHAT ARE THE DUTIES OF THE CHURCHES, AND OF INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIANS, IN TRAINING YOUNG MEN FOR THE MINISTRY.

For the purposes of this Essay, it may be assumed that the duties of churches and of individual Christians are identical. No treatment of their separate obligations is required by the terms of the question, except so far as they may be indicated in a general discussion of the theme.

It should be held as an unquestioned truth, that Christians and churches *have a duty to perform*, in training young men for the ministry. The question to be discussed implies as much as this. But in view of the lukewarm sympathy, not to say prevailing skepticism with which this subject is regarded by the community, it is needful that we go back to first principles, and satisfy ourselves that the foundation of this interest standeth sure.

To do this, consider for a moment the Christian ministry, its position, its relation to the Church, and the amount and quality of its influence. No words can express its value. It is essential both to Christian growth, and Christian conquest—necessary alike to the inner life and external ordinances of religion. Under a pastor's faithful care every interest of society prospers, deprived of it, every good thing languishes. A flock without a shepherd, a school without an instructor, a government without an executive, an army without a general, such is a church without a minister. Feeble is he, indeed, and frail, an earthen vessel full of imperfections, beset with temptations and harrassed with fears; yet the glory of his priesthood surpasses that of Aaron, his influence is more than kingly, and the simple dignity of his high office looks serenely down upon all earthly distinctions.

Yet ministers are not supplied to the churches by miracle. They are not divinely summoned to the work like Jeremiah from among the

priests of Anathoth, or Amos from the herdsmen of Tehoak. They are not called by Christ as was Matthew from a custom-house desk, or Peter and John from a fisherman's boat. Nor does any supernatural vision confront them, like that which subdued the persecuting Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus, and made him the herald of salvation to the Gentiles.

On the contrary, ministers are developed from the churches in what may be called a natural way; lifted up from obscurity by the peculiar influences that have their home in the house of the Lord. They are the offspring of Zion. The churches should raise up ministers, just as they do members, by a self-perpetuating power. If they cannot do this, if they cannot replenish their ranks with officers as well as privates, they are in a dying state, and will soon become extinct. It is then a vital function of the Church to train ministers. It is not merely a dictate of duty and of interest, but a matter of self-preservation. To neglect it is more than folly—it is suicide.

Hence it becomes a matter of interest to inquire, *How ought Christians and churches to perform this duty?* And to begin at the beginning:—

1. *Let parents consecrate their sons to the Christian ministry, from their birth.* For a work so important as preaching the gospel the longest course of training is too short. A life will not suffice for it, and we cannot commence too soon. It is perhaps the chief defect of ministerial education, that it is commonly left to be decided by circumstances, and not originally imbedded in the faith of believing parents. We know of nothing so important as to hallow the infant in his cradle to the holy use and orders of the Church, and from the earliest moments of his existence to dedicate him to this special work. The germ of a good minister is in his parents' faith. It should be an abiding impression with the Christian mother, one which shall make her whole nature serious and tender: "I am to train up this child, by the grace of God, for the sanctuary. He lies now upon my breast a helpless infant. But a quarter of a century hence, when I am dead and gone, he is perhaps to fill a pulpit. Multitudes will hang anxiously upon his lips, and ask him the question, What shall we do to be saved? My faith embraces this child as a chosen instrument to preach his glorious gospel. It is to me the substance of things hoped for whenever I forecast his destiny."—Is it not reasonable to believe, that the prayers of such a Christian mother will be more earnest and importunate than if she only anticipated for her son a position in some regular business, or opportunity to cultivate for another generation the parental acres?—Such were the yearnings of those godly women Eunice and Lois over young Timothy.

Thus Monica prayed and wept for her son Augustine. And the mother of Philip Doddridge predisposed his mind to his future work as she gave him pictorial bible lessons from the tiles in her chimney corner.

Such aspirations for their sons are creditable to the faith of either a father or a mother. It is admitted that they may be ambitious, but it is a laudable ambition, a holy ambition. Let them never cease from it until some manifest disqualification for the office shall compel them to abandon their purpose, or until death shall summon their child to a higher ministry in heaven.

2. *Let all the influences of home be in the same direction.* The most important theological seminary and the best education society is the Christian family. Starting from that germinal consecration which was coëval with the dawn of his being, but of which the child knew nothing, he should find himself attracted, as he becomes conscious of his surroundings, by every thing lovely and pure, and encouraged to think and act in right directions. Some children are unfortunately disgusted with the ministry by what they see in the homes of ministers. Others are made to drink in with their mother's milk an idea of the essential meanness and dependence of the clergy. Just the contrary should be the result in a Christian household. The devotions of the family should be so warm and pure as well as varied and appropriate, so free from sanctimoniousness and so attuned to heavenly praise, the Sabbath should be so much a delight and honorable, so still and orderly in its peaceful rest, the Sanctuary and Sabbath-school should be so devoutly and reverently frequented, the visits of the Pastor should be so sincerely welcomed, his expressed opinions so respectfully listened to, his counsels so carefully treasured up, his office so honored and his person so held in affectionate veneration, as to impress upon the mind of every child in that little circle the belief that no interest of life is so important as religion, and that no people upon earth are so honored as its faithful ministers.

The secret infidelity which sneers at the "parson," and slurs the pulpit, would that it were confined to the lyceum lecture, the newspaper, and the popular monthly! Had it never invaded the families of professed Christians, coldly to criticise the preacher's manner, and to travesty for the entertainment of young eyes and ears his sacred functions, there had been more of popular regard for his office, and a larger number of aspirants for his place. If our children ever come to honor the ministry, we must honor the ministry in the presence of our children. The character of the ministry will be eventually determined by

our every day opinions. In order to the production of a wise and holy ministry for the Church, there must be wise and holy churches, families and Christians. The stream will not rise higher than its source. As in the prophet Hosea's time, so now it will be true, "like people like priest." No answer to the question before us is so pertinent or important as that which refers to *home influences* as the grand instrumentality to be relied on for the supply of pastors to the churches. The pulpits must be replenished from the firesides. The firesides must send help to the sanctuary.

3. *Let all public religious services supplement the family, and still further stimulate reverence for the ordinances of religion, and esteem for its ministers.*

Next to domestic influences are those of a social character. With not a few, who have enjoyed no Christian home, the latter are the stronger. In the meetings of Christians, whether on the Sabbath or on other days, in the sanctuary or the conference-room, the ministry as an essential force in Zion, and the training of such a ministry as a vital interest of the Church, should be devoutly recognized. The prayers offered, not only at the missionary concert and the annual college Fast, but at the weekly lecture, in the Sunday-school and in the sacred desk, should make earnest mention of this interest, and leave an impression of its indispensableness. The pulpit itself should sustain the pulpit, and shew how it is to be replenished. It should if possible so present the great truths of the gospel, so array its motives and portray its hopes and promises, as to attract young minds toward the profession, and kindle in them a zeal to enter it.

The clergyman, who dwells in some doleful "shady-side" nook, and looks upon life with a sad countenance, who holds up to view the heavy burdens of his office, but never kindles into glowing descriptions of its joys, will do little to enlist the sympathies of ardent young men in study for the gospel ministry. Without professional enthusiasm not even the Christian ministry can be maintained. But when both pastor and people agree in magnifying the office, it may be expected that some will catch the spirit of the ministry, and be ready to offer themselves for the work.

4. *Let every local church confidently expect to raise up one or more candidates for the ministry.* Just as the faith of a father and a mother discerns a preacher of the gospel in the infant who cannot yet express his wants in language, so may a church be assured when she looks upon her goodly sons, that some of them shall surely become pillars in the house of the Lord. It is not enough for a church to expect and pray

that ministers may arise from other quarters; let her detail for this special service some of her own children. No better material can be found elsewhere than she herself possesses. A clergyman needs not to be gifted by nature far above his fellows. If he have good natural talents and sense, the grace of God and a well-directed education will do the rest. It requires only the faith and the prayer and the word of encouragement at the right time, to call forth from among the lads of any little village of our Commonwealth a man of God, whose influence may reach to the antipodes of his obscure birth-place and bless distant nations. A small town in Western Massachusetts has contributed to the Church not less than forty Christian ministers; of whom those now living are stationed at far distant posts, and are reaping the gospel harvest in the four quarters of the globe. What honor will forever redound to that insignificant village, and the little church therein! Of that Zion it shall be said with joy, "This and that man was born in her, and the Highest himself shall establish her. The Lord shall count when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there."

Shall not every church compete for this rich prize? Shall she not exercise a kind of eclectic power, and literally "ordain elders" from among her own choice youth? Shall she not, in the exercise of her wisdom, encourage and set forward some of her more promising young converts in the way of ministerial preparation? Can she *fail* to perform this service, and be guiltless?

5. *Let Christians and churches extend pecuniary aid to such as need it, in the prosecution of their studies.*

God hath chosen the poor of this world rich in faith. In many instances that faith has looked towards the Christian ministry, but could see no hope of reaching it, without external aid. Thus earnestly did Jonas King, William Goodell, Cyrus Hamlin, and Justin Perkins, and Joseph S. Clark, our beloved brother just deceased, and many other pious young men, survey the field and anxiously canvsss the question of personal duty. Had no helping hand been extended to them, their noble ambition would have been crushed in the bud, and the Christian world might never have heard their names.

It is found difficult to bring the cause of ministerial education home to the attention and sympathy of our churches. It has been difficult to persuade the country in time past that the support of the Military Academy at West Point was a wise expenditure. But now in this exigency of the nation, every eye is turned toward one of its ablest young graduates as the head of our army, who will prove, as we hope, a second Washington, to conduct our cause to victory and peace. Every crisis

that occurs in the Church, will in like manner vindicate the wisdom, aye the absolute necessity of a careful training, at whatever expense, for the ministerial office. Funds devoted to this object are well invested. A church in earnest, aware that she is contending with an unscrupulous and desperate foe, will be free in her appropriations for the education of her leaders. If at any point she withholds supplies, it will not, surely, be here.

The funds contributed for ministerial education will of course be bestowed directly upon the young men engaged in study, so far as they are the sons of parents able to educate them for the holy office. And here be it observed, that any Christian brother whom God hath blessed not only with a gifted and pious son, but also with this world's goods, may well count it among the most precious of his earthly privileges to support that son through the Academy and the College, and the Theological Seminary, till he shall enter the pulpit, owing no man any thing but to love one another. And if this fundamental interest of Zion were cherished with an ardor at all commensurate with its magnitude, no young man of talent whom the Spirit and providence of God should separate to the work of the ministry, would be permitted to assume the sacred office under the burden of a debt. The Christian church would not become accessory to such a robbery of his peace, and even of his sleep, as he must suffer before he can honorably discharge his obligations from his slender earnings.

In affording pecuniary aid to those sons of the church who are worthy but destitute, it is a question whether it should reach them directly by the gift of individuals, or through the channel of a benevolent organization. In favor of the first named method, it may be argued that it calls forth sympathy more powerfully by localizing the benefactions made. But even this reacts injuriously in those cases where the expectations of the donors fail to be realized in the subsequent history of the young men assisted. A well-managed *organization* is, we think, decidedly preferable, on account of its ability to hold its beneficiaries to a high standard and tone of culture; on account of the thoughtful delicacy with which it can approach and succor its objects; on account of the promptness and system with which it is able to collect and disburse the benefactions of the churches; and also by reason of its stimulating influence upon the whole interest of education for the Christian ministry. Such an organization is the American Education Society, greatly blessed of God in the good which it has done, hallowed by the fragrant memories of Evarts, Cornelius, Wisner and Porter; doing still its own unostentatious work, the fundamental charity of the Church. And

it seems not a little singular that an institution so honorable in its origin, so favored in its history, and so unobjectionable in its present management, should receive pecuniary support from only about one hundred and twenty-five of the four hundred and eighty-eight churches of our order in this Commonwealth.

It is matter of grateful thanks to God, that no pressing exigency exists at the present time in respect to candidates for the ministry. This Essay is rather designed to indicate the permanent policy to be pursued by our Congregational churches in order that they may be furnished from age to age with that cultured, wise and pious ministry which they have elected and delight in.

As a matter of fact, New England is raising up more Congregational ministers now than she was ten years ago. At that time the rate of production was about *sixty* per year. At the present time the annual productions is not far from *eighty*. The last class graduated at Andover numbered *forty-two*.

It is not probable that the Congregational churches of Massachusetts could be induced to sanction any movement toward shortening the course of study or lowering the standard of qualifications for the ministry. Their demand for able and faithful leaders is imperative and unyielding. But respecting the law of ministerial demand and supply, and the silent but steady processes which culminate after many years in men of God, thoroughly furnished unto all good works, the churches greatly need to be instructed; and frequently reminded of their duty. Both the men and the means must come forth from their own bosom. They must create the ministry which they prefer. As the monarch of the bee-hive is selected by the swarm from among the common working bees, while in the larvæ state, enclosed in a peculiar kind of cell, fed with peculiarly nutritious food, and carefully developed by a curious process into the leader and parent of the whole family; so must our busy congregations, imitating the sagacious denizens of the hive, select some from among the young workers of the church, immure them in scholar's cells, sustain them in classic halls, feed them, clothe them, cheer them, surround them with the affectionate tokens of respect and veneration, let them want for nothing that can prepare them for spiritual dominion in God's house, until they are ready to become each a leader in the commonwealth of Israel, and dispense unto all that word of life, which is sweeter to the taste than honey and the honey-comb.

ESSAY.—No. 3.

BY REV. EDMUND K. ALDEN, SOUTH BOSTON.

THE BEST METHOD OF DEVELOPING THE WORKING POWER OF YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

The working-power of a Christian consists in that divine grace which dwells in the renewed heart, operating through an efficient instrument. The degree of the working power is measured by the degree of grace and by the quality and training of the instrument. The young Christian is one in whom divine grace is but just implanted, and ordinarily the instrument is untrained. The best method of developing the working power of the young Christian, therefore, must aim in these two directions, first, to develope grace thoroughly in the heart, and secondly, to educate the faculties to their most efficient instrumental use. This work will not be effected with all individuals by the observance of precisely the same rules—for fitnesses and opportunities differ—but by a regard to a few fundamental principles capable of facile and varied application.

1. *Let the young Christian be taught that he has entered upon a definite and life-long work distinct in its nature from every other.* Let him not think that the religion of Christ is an episode in his life, but rather that this is itself the life to which he is personally and entirely consecrated—that his name is now enrolled, and he is starting forth upon a course of direct activity as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. Many fail of a thorough working development in Christian character from the simple fact, that they do not realize that they are put to a definite work. They are perpetually conjugated in the passive rather than in the active voice, whereas the first inquiry for a Christian who appreciates his office is, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

2. *Let the young Christian be taught that his personal, definite, Christian work includes every department of his earthly life.* This is to decide his occupation, his friendships, his reading, his amusements, all

his plans of thought, of study, of business. Not a few have entered upon the nominally Christian work who have regarded it as confined to certain times and seasons, to certain specific religious acts and words and responsibilities. This is a fatal error to thorough Christian development, and should be guarded against from the first.

3. *Let the young Christian be taught, that his personal, definite work, must aim directly toward the main end of the Christian earthly service, the salvation of the souls of men and the extension of Christ's Gospel through the world.* As our Lord taught his disciples, when they prayed, to offer as their first petitions, "Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven,"—all else being regarded as subordinate and subservient—so the Christian work from the outset must be planned with reference to the grand and ultimate end, for which the disciple is chosen to the work, the subdual of a rebellious world to the willing obedience of him whose right it is to reign.

From the very first, the young Christian must be taught practically to feel that his specific vocation is in some form to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and in such a way that it shall reach to the ends of the earth. He must recognize himself as personally bound by the last command of the Lord before his ascension, as truly as by every other command.

A young man who is now preaching the gospel of Christ as a missionary to the heathen world, in giving an account of his personal religious experience, stated that the intensity of the struggle in yielding his heart to Christ was in answering the question, whether or not he was willing to consecrate himself to preach the gospel of Christ as a foreign missionary; and he felt from the moment that he said, I give myself to Christ, that he also said, I give myself to the work of preaching the gospel of Christ to the heathen world. This is by no means a solitary instance. The principle involved in it underlies every true Christian consecration. In clear perception and deliberate resolve, it ought to be distinctly in the eye from the beginning of the Christian life. On no other basis, for this is the only broad Christian basis, can be developed the athletic working power of the young disciple of Christ. Each one should feel that he individually, as truly as any apostle, or any preacher of righteousness, is going forth to the end of his life under the banner upon which is inscribed, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

4. *Let the young Christian be taught that he needs and must pursue a thorough, systematic training, in order that he may be fitted most effi-*

ciently to fulfil his trust. How can I prepare myself for the widest usefulness in the service of Christ? How can I perfect the instrument committed to my care, and employ it successfully? These are the questions now. The young Christian must be encouraged to think of them soberly and prayerfully, and must be assisted in his inquiries by the experience and counsel of his elders. He needs to be put under a course of wise and somewhat rigid discipline. He must surrender himself to the appropriate educational drill, if he would be truly fitted for his perfected Christian work. There is a prescribed course for spiritual acquisition, growth, and training, There are rules to be observed for the cultivation of the inner power in the heart, and for the cultivation of the instrument by which that power is to be used. These rules cannot be safely disregarded by any one. If we would be trained Christians, we must go to the school for training, and to the very best school when we are young; we must go willingly, and allow ourselves to be well-drilled in all those elements of character and attainment by which alone, Christian power is effective among men. In habits of prayer, in the study of the word of God, in the expression of religious sentiment, in the practical duties of the Christian life, the young disciple must be not only taught but trained. He is to be educated to a sense of personal responsibility for the accomplishment of his utmost in Christian acquisition and usefulness. He must select his own department of work wisely, and prosecute it thoroughly. What this department should be, will be determined by circumstances, tastes, adaptation, age and education. It is impossible to lay down definite rules for the decision of this question. Yet the basis of religious education is fundamentally the same; and it should be our perpetual aim in our churches to establish such a thorough course of disciplinary training, that by it, every young Christian, if faithful and diligent in the use of his opportunities, may be confirmed in the essential principles of Christian growth.

Such a course of training will include systematic instruction in the word of God, and in the best methods of studying that word. It will direct in the formation of correct mental habits, and it will wisely guide in the practical use of the faculties of the soul in the process of training. Here the Sabbath-school, the Bible-class, and Young People's Associations for appropriate objects of improvement and benevolence, become very efficient means of grace. It is almost essential that a tendency to independent, individual thought should be connected with some happy method of social culture. "Iron sharpeneth iron"; and the minds of the young aspirants for high Christian attainments should

be brought into frequent and lively contact. Thus they early learn the invaluable art of an appropriate method of expressing thought: here is the drill-school in which they are disciplined for the graver responsibilities of their mature years.

It is very important that the young Christian commence and continue his religious education, determined to pursue a life-long religious training, one which shall enlarge as the years roll on. Let him enter upon a course of inquiry and activity which shall be always opening before him wider fields of influence, ever calling more imperatively for him to enter. So will the freshness of youthful energy be associated with the well-knitted strength of matured discipline, and so will Christian character become most effective.

In brief, we must throw upon young Christians all the personal responsibility which they can bear, and must be constantly adding to the pressure. We must watch over and guide them, without intruding our guidance too prominently upon them, leaving them as much as possible to a free development of their own energies under a general latent supervision. Nothing is more annoying to young people than to be perpetually dictated to by their elders; nothing is more certain to repel, than to give them the impression that you are trying to stretch them upon some narrow Procrustean bed, to fit which they are to be forcibly developed or suppressed. There are some things they can learn only by experience, two of which are their own fitnesses and their own failings. We must provide the means for their perfected training, and must then in all possible ways attract them toward it, and hold them in it, remembering ourselves and teaching them to remember, that the main responsibility in developing their working power must necessarily rest with each individual, that even the most favorable opportunities will be of small account without well-directed, indefatigable personal application, and that with this, all difficulties are sure to be ultimately overcome.

As Dr. Emmons' two rules for efficient speaking were, first, Have something to say, and secondly, Say it, so we may sum up the rules for efficient working, first, Have something to do, and secondly, Do it. The more, by thorough training and discipline, we ourselves are, the more valuable will be, both what we say and what we do.

A sententious writer upon Christian growth gives this precept, "Have it as a law, to be always doing great works, i. e. works that are great to you. You will have just as much power as you believe you can have." We must therefore teach the youthful members of our churches, while steadily active, doing the duty which lieth nearest them.

and in everything doing their best, to be always hearing the onward summons toward things greater and better, under the tuition of the excellent motto that "the best reward for having wrought well already is to have more to do." The same principle was long ago taught us in the words of inspiration—the grand Scriptural principle for developing the working power of the young Christian, perpetually fulfilling in the years of ripening Christian experience—"*Be thou faithful over a few things, and I will* MAKE *thee ruler over many things.*"

MINUTES

OF THE

GENERAL CONFERENCE

OF THE

Congregational Churches in Massachusetts,

AT ITS THIRD ANNUAL SESSION,

HELD IN THE ELIOT CHURCH, NEWTON, SEPT. 9–11, 1862.

WITH THE

REPORT ON THE STATE OF RELIGION,

AND THE

ESSAYS

READ BEFORE THE CONFERENCE.

BOSTON:
CROCKER AND BREWSTER,
47 Washington Street.
1862.

NOTICES.

The meeting of the Conference in 1863 will be held in the Calvinist Church, (Rev. Dr. Seth Sweetser's,) Worcester, commencing on Tuesday the 8th of September, at 4 o'clock, P. M., and closing at 4 o'clock, P. M., of the Thursday following.

Rev. Julius H. Seeley, D. D., of Amherst College, is elected the Preacher of the opening Sermon.

The Berkshire South Conference will furnish the Preacher of the Sermon which is to be delivered before the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

The Delegates to the next General Conference are particularly reminded of the 16th Article of the Constitution, which requires them to bring brief *written narratives* of the state of religion within the bounds of their several Local Conferences.

It is desirable that the Local Conferences, in choosing Delegates, "select one Clerical and one Lay Delegate from the number of those who attended the preceding year."

OFFICERS.

Recording Secretary.

Rev. JOSHUA W. WELLMAN, Newton.

Statistical Secretary.

Rev. JOHN L. TAYLOR, Andover.

Treasurer.

Bro. STEPHEN T. FARWELL, Cambridge.

Provisional Committee.

Rev. SETH SWEETSER, D. D., Worcester.
Rev. EBENEZER CUTLER, Worcester.
Rev. WILLIAM P. PAINE, D. D., Holden.
Bro. JOSEPH A. DENNY, Leicester.
Bro. BENJAMIN D. ALLEN, Worcester.

MINUTES.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES OF MASSACHUSETTS commenced its third annual session in the Eliot Church, Newton, on Tuesday, September 9, 1862, at 4 o'clock, P. M.

The pastor of the Church, Rev. Joshua W. Wellman, called the meeting to order.

A quorum being present, the Conference was organized by the choice of Dea. William Thurston of Newburyport as Moderator.

The Moderator offered prayer.

It being stated by the Recording Secretary that assistance would be needed in keeping the records of the meeting, Rev. James T. McCollom was appointed Scribe, and Rev. James P. Kimball, Assistant Scribe.

Rev. Stephen S. Smith, Dea. Charles Scudder, and Rev. Joshua T. Tucker were chosen a Committee on Credentials.

Rev. Joshua W. Wellman, Rev. John Pike, and Bro. Richard P. Waters, were chosen a Committee of Arrangements.

Rev. Joseph A. Copp, D. D., Rev. John P. Skeele, and Dea. Homer Merriam, were chosen a Committee on Nominations.

Rev. Benjamin R. Allen, Rev. Hiram Mead, and Dea. Charles Scudder, were chosen a Committee on the State of Religion.

The Committee on Credentials reported the following

ROLL OF DELEGATES.

Andover Conference:—

Rev. Benjamin F. Clark, North Chelmsford.
Bro. Edward Buck, Andover.

Barnstable County Conference:

Rev. James P. Kimball, Falmouth.
Dea. Lorenzo Eldred, Falmouth.

Berkshire South Conference:—

Rev. Lewis Pennell, West Stockbridge.
Dea. Harrison Garfield, Lee.

Brookfield Conference:—

Rev. Stephen S. Smith, Warren.
Rev. John H. Gurney, New Braintree.
Dea. Henry Haynes, Sturbridge.
Bro. Otis Lane, Ware.

Essex North Conference:—

Rev. John Pike, Rowley.
Rev. James T. McCollom, Bradford.
Dea. William Thurston, Newburyport.
Bro. Luther Moody, Byfield.
Dea. Daniel Adams, Newburyport.

Essex South Conference:—

Rev. James M. Bacon, Essex.
Rev. David Bremner, Rockport.
Bro. Daniel E. Safford, Hamilton.
Bro. Eben Caldwell, Ipswich.

Franklin County Conference:—

Bro. Stephen Clark, Whateley.

Hampden County Conference:—

Rev. Joel S. Bingham, Westfield.
Rev. John P. Skeele, Wilbraham.
Dea. Homer Merriam, Springfield.

Hampshire East Conference:—

Rev. Hiram Mead, South Hadley.
Rev. David Bancroft, Prescott.
Bro. Eleazer Porter, Hadley.

Mendon Conference:—

Rev. Andrew Bigelow, Medfield.

Middlesex South Conference:—

Rev. Erastus Dickinson, Sudbury.
Rev. Joshua T. Tucker, Holliston.
Dea. William Stetson, Marlboro'.
Bro. Solomon Flagg, West Needham.

Middlesex Union Conference:—

Rev. John Dodge, Harvard.
Rev. James H. Fitts, Boxboro'.

Norfolk Conference:—

Rev. Charles W. Wood, North Bridgewater.
Rev. James P. Terry, South Weymouth.
Bro. Moses French, East Randolph.
Bro. Ebenezer Alden, Randolph.

Old Colony Conference:—

Rev. Henry W. Parker, New Bedford.

Pilgrim Conference:—

Rev. Samuel Woodbury, Plymouth.
Rev. Daniel D. Tappan, Marshfield.

Salem Missionary Union:—

Rev. Benjamin R. Allen, Marblehead.
Rev. William S. Coggin, Boxford.
Bro. Richard P. Waters, Salem.

Suffolk North Conference:—

Rev. Joseph A. Copp, D. D., Chelsea.
Rev. Albert H. Plumb, Chelsea.
Bro. Elijah D. Goodrich, Cambridgeport.

Suffolk South Conference:—

Rev. Henry M. Dexter, Boston.
Rev. John O. Means, Roxbury.
Dea. Charles Scudder, Boston.
Dea. Choate Burnham, South Boston.

Taunton and Vicinity Conference:—

Rev. John Haskell, Raynham.
Rev. Mortimer Blake, Taunton.
Bro. Abraham Perkins, North Middleboro'.
Bro. Zebulon Pratt, North Middleboro'.

Woburn Conference:—

Rev. Jesse G. D. Stearns, Billerica.
Rev. Samuel H. Tolman, Wilmington.
Dea. Phinehas W. Chamberlain, Bedford.

Worcester Central Conference:—

Rev. Ebenezer Cutler, Worcester.
Rev. William T. Briggs, Princeton.
Bro. Lucius S. Allen, Shrewsbury.

Worcester North Conference:—

Rev. John C. Paine, Gardner.

Worcester South Conference:—

Rev. Luther H. Sheldon, Westboro'.
Rev. Joshua L. Maynard, East Douglas.
Bro. Caleb T. Chapin, Whitinsville.

FROM FOREIGN BODIES.

Canada Congregational Union.

Rev. Cyril Pearl, Waterville, Canada East.

After a short season spent in devotional exercises, the Conference adjourned to meet at 7½ o'clock in the evening.

Tuesday evening. The Conference met according to adjournment. After devotional exercises, conducted by Rev. Joshua T. Tucker, a sermon was preached by Rev. Ebenezer Cutler of Worcester. Text Ps. 133.

SECOND DAY.

Wednesday, Sept. 10. The Conference resumed its session at 9 o'clock, A. M., and engaged in devotional exercises for one hour.

FIRST ESSAY.

Rev. William Barrows of Reading, then read an Essay on the question, "In what ways shall the tendency to Sabbath desecration be resisted?"*

A discussion followed, in which the Conference limited the speakers to five minutes each. The subject was discussed by Bro. Eleazer Porter, Rev. Asa Bullard, Bro. Eben Caldwell, Rev. Daniel D. Tappan, Rev. James M. Bacon, Rev. Russell S. Cook of New York, Dea. Horace Merriam, Rev. William L. Mather, Chaplain 3d Reg. Wisconsin Vol., Rev. Joshua T. Tucker, and Rev. Daniel L. Furber.

DELEGATE FROM THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION OF CANADA.

The Conference then received the fraternal salutations of the Congregational Union of Canada, by Rev. Cyril Pearl, delegate from that body.

TREASURER'S REPORT.

At twelve o'clock the Conference attended to business. The Treasurer, Bro. Stephen T. Farwell, made his report, which was accepted—audited by Bro. Daniel E. Safford, and adopted.

APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES.

The following Committees were appointed:

Committee on Finance,—Bro. Stephen T. Farwell, Rev. John H. Gurney, and Bro. Otis Lane.

Committee on the State of the Country,—Rev. Mortimer Blake, Rev. Joel S. Bingham, Bro. Richard P. Waters, Rev. Hiram Mead, and Bro. Edward Buck.

Committee on Home Evangelization,—Rev. William Barrows, Rev. John Pike, Rev. Daniel Furber, Bro. Elijah D. Goodrich, Dea. Lorenzo Eldred.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE UNION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE AND THE GENERAL ASSOCIATION.

The Committee upon the Union of the General Conference and the General Association made a report concluding with the following recommendation:

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*See Essay, No. 1.

"Your Committee would therefore recommend that the Conference take no further action on the subject until the General Association shall have made their decision."

Their report was accepted and adopted.

After prayer by Rev. Joseph Vaill, D. D., of Palmer, the Conference took a recess till 2½ o'clock, P. M.

Wednesday, P. M., 2½ o'clock. The Conference met and spent an hour in devotional exercises.

SECOND ESSAY, AND THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON STATISTICS.

An Essay was then read by Dea. Milton M. Fisher of Medway Village, on "The obligation of private Christians to carry on the work of Home Evangelization by means of social intercourse and the holding of neighborhood meetings."*

After which the Conference listened to the report of the Committee on Statistics with reference to Home Evangelization, which was presented by its chairman, Rev. Isaac P. Langworthy. On motion, it was accepted, and in accordance with its recommendation it was

Voted, That a Committee of five on Home Evangelization be appointed; and that said Committee be instructed to solicit the coöperation of the Executive Committee of the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society in prosecution of this work.

The general subject was then discussed by Rev. Isaac P. Langworthy, Bro. Richard P. Waters, Dea. Horace Merriam, Bro. Eben Caldwell, Rev. Joshua W. Wellman, Rev. James T. McCollom, Rev. Samuel J. Spaulding, D. D., Rev. John Pike, Rev. Henry M. Dexter, Dea. James N. Kimball, Rev. Richard B. Thurston, and Rev. Israel P. Warren.

REPORT OF THE STATISTICAL SECRETARY.

Rev. John L. Taylor, the Statistical Secretary made a report recommending that the Conference do not publish statistics for the present. The report was accepted and adopted.

APPOINTMENT OF PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE.

The Provisional Committee for the ensuing year was then chosen, viz. Rev. Seth Sweetser, D. D., Rev. Ebenezer Cutler, Rev. William P. Paine, D. D., Bro. Joseph A. Denny, and Bro. Benjamin D. Allen.

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*See Essay, No. 2.

The attention of the Conference being called by the Committee of Arrangements to a petition of the pastors of several churches of Watertown and vicinity, the following *minute* in respect to it was unanimously adopted:

The State Conference of Congregational Churches in Massachusetts, at its annual meeting in Newton, Sept. 9—11, having learned with deep regret the fact, that in the United States Arsenal at Watertown labor is required on the Sabbath, the same as on other days, and that thereby from 700 to 1,000 persons lose the rest of the Sabbath and violate its sacredness, therefore

Resolved, That we deeply deplore so conspicuous and palpable an instance of disregard for sacred time directly under the eye of the respected authorities of our land and with their approbation; and while we concur most heartily in the sentiments of the petition accompanying this minute we join our prayer to that of the petitioners, most respectfully and earnestly asking our honored Chief Magistrate, the President of the United States, that he will order such a change in the management of the Arsenal, that hereafter the Sabbath may be a day of rest to all who are connected with it.

The Conference then took a recess to 7 o'clock, P. M.

The evening session was opened at 7 o'clock with prayer by Rev. Stephen H. Hayes.

THIRD ESSAY.

Rev. Eden B. Foster, D. D. of West Springfield, then read an Essay on "The necessity and methods of guarding against neglecting the personal inward life on the part of Christians, in the increasing outward activities to which they are now called."*

This subject was then discussed by Rev. Calvin E. Stowe, D. D., Rev. Joel S. Bingham, Rev. Samuel Woodbury, Rev. Edward W. Clark, and Rev. Edward P. Hammond.

After prayer by Rev. Eden B. Foster, D. D., adjourned to meet the next morning at 8½ o'clock.

THIRD DAY.

Thursday morning, Sept. 11. Met according to adjournment. Rev. James T. McCollom offered prayer.

*See Essay, No. 3.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON FINANCE.

The Committee on Finance made a report, which was accepted, and on their recommendation it was

Voted, That the Treasurer be authorized to notify the Scribes or Treasurers of the several local Conferences of the assessment upon each Conference of a sum equal to Fifty cents for each church; and to request those officers to collect the same immediately and forward it to the Treasurer of the General Conference.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE STATE OF THE COUNTRY.

The Committee on the State of the Country made a report, which was accepted, and, the time having arrived for devotional exercises, laid upon the table.

An hour was spent in devotional exercises conducted by Rev. Isaac P. Langworthy.

FOURTH ESSAY.

At 10¼ o'clock, A. M., an Essay was read by Bro. Joseph S. Ropes of Roxbury—subject: "Interest and usefulness of Sabbath schools dependent on personal faithfulness and the study of the Scriptures on the part of teachers, rather than on general exercises."*

The subject was afterwards discussed by Rev. Sanford S. Smith, Rev. Joel S. Bingham, Rev. John Pike, Rev. William Barrows, Bro. Frederick A. Benson, Dea. Daniel Adams, Rev. Abijah P. Marvin, Bro. Zebulon Pratt, Rev. Increase N. Tarbox, Rev. Dorus Clark, Rev. Martin Moore, Rev. Henry W. Parker, Rev. Joshua T. Tucker, and Rev. Birdsey G. Northrup.

PREACHER FOR 1863.

Voted, That Rev. Julius H. Seelye, D. D., of Amherst College, be invited to preach the opening sermon at the next annual meeting of the Conference.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE STATE OF RELIGION.

The Conference then listened to the report of the Committee on the State of Religion, which was accepted and adopted.

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*See Essay, No. 4.

PLACE OF MEETING IN 1863.

Voted, That the next annual meeting be held with the Church of which Rev. Seth Sweetser, D. D., is pastor, in Worcester.

PUBLISHING COMMITTEE.

Voted, That the Secretary and Treasurer compose the Publishing Committee.

RESOLUTIONS ON THE STATE OF THE COUNTRY.

The resolutions on the State of the Country were taken from the table, and were unanimously passed as follows:

Resolved, 1. With humility and shame we confess the sins that have brought the righteous judgments of God upon our nation; our pride, ambition and worldliness have led us to sin with a high hand; we have oppressed and enslaved the poor and needy; we have defiled the good land that the Lord has given us.

Resolved, 2. We receive the fact that an armed rebellion still rages unsuppressed and defiant against our government, not only as a proof that we are not yet as a nation sufficiently humbled before God, and therefore not prepared for his deliverance, but also as an earnest call for our greatly increased humiliation and prayers and our augmented energy and self-sacrifice for the defense of our liberties.

Resolved, 3. While we acknowledge our entire dependence upon God for the triumph of our Government, we believe that God will secure this result through appropriate human agencies, and therefore we look for a *complete* and *permanent* restoration of union and peace to our country only from the removal of slavery, the chief source of this rebellion.

Resolved, 4. We believe that we express the unanimous feeling of our Churches in this State, when we pledge our loyal support and sympathy to the President of these United States in the most vigorous measures for the suppression of this rebellion; and we fervently implore for him, his cabinet, and all our civil and military authorities, the wisdom and guidance of Heaven, so necessary to the discharge of their present solemn responsibilities—for our Army and Navy the protection of God and the courage which comes from his presence and obedience to his holy commands—and the consolations of the Gospel upon the sick and wounded and the households mourning for the death of the slain.

Resolved, 5. Since the first distracting novelty of the war has given place to deeper thoughtfulness in the public mind, and multitudes are called to the most solemn duty of laying themselves or their friends on the altar of their country; and we know not but that more fearful judgments of Heaven will yet take away one of every two in the field and by the fire-side, we believe

that it is the pressing duty of ministers and churches to labor as never before for the immediate conversion of all hearts to Christ.

Voted, That a copy of the resolutions on the State of the Country, attested by the proper officer, be forwarded to the President of the United States.

VOTES OF THANKS.

On motion of Rev. John Pike, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That we return thanks to Almighty God, for the harmony and spirituality which have marked the services of the Conference; for the earnest devotion to the interests of the country and the welfare of the world which have been exhibited during the meeting.

Resolved, That the thanks of the Conference be given to Dea. William Thurston for the skill and faithfulness with which he has applied the rules of the Conference and given an interest to its deliberations.

Resolved, That we tender our thanks to the Pastor of the Eliot Church and its Conference Committee, and to the citizens of Newton, for that marked hospitality and kindness which have made the intervals of our meeting so pleasant and happy; and also our thanks to the Choir for their services.

Resolved, That our thanks be given to the officers of the Boston and Worcester Railroad, for furnishing the members of the Conference who have passed over the road with return tickets.

DELEGATES TO FOREIGN BODIES.

The following delegates to Foreign Bodies were appointed:

To the Congregational Union of Canada:
Rev. Joshua W. Wellman.

To the General Conference of Maine:
Rev. William Barrows.

The Minutes were read and approved.

Voted, That after the Communion services, in the afternoon, the Conference be adjourned, *sine die*.

Thursday, P. M. The Conference met at 2 o'clock to observe the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The devotional exercises preceding the sermon were conducted by Rev. John Pike. The sermon was preached by Rev. James P. Kimball, from 2 Tim. i. 7, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

The services at the Lords Table were conducted by Rev. William S. Coggin and Rev. Timothy Stowe. After which, in accordance with a previous vote, the Conference was adjourned, *sine die*.

WILLIAM THURSTON, *Mrderator.*

JAMES T. MCCOLLOM, *Scribe.*
JAMES P. KIMBALL, *Assistant Scribe.*

A true copy of the Minutes.

Attest, JOSHUA W. WELLMAN,
Rccording Secretary.

CONSTITUTION.

1. This body shall be called the GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES IN MASSACHUSETTS.

2. The object of this Conference is to secure Christian union, fellowship and intercourse among the churches; to promote spirituality; incite to a more elevated piety, and stimulate Christians to greater activity and efficiency in advancing the Redeemer's kingdom.

3. This Conference shall, under no circumstances, exercise ecclesiastical authority, or interfere with the government or discipline of the churches, or consent to hear appeals, or give advice in ecclesiastical causes of any kind.

4. Each Local Conference, composed of evangelical Congregational Churches within the State, may appoint five delegates to attend the annual meeting of the Conference, two of whom shall be pastors of churches, and three lay members.

5. The officers of the Conference shall be a Moderator, a Recording Secretary, a Statistical Secretary, and a Treasurer.

6. The Moderator shall be chosen by ballot from among the delegates present, and shall preside during the meeting for which he is chosen.

7. The Secretaries and Treasurer shall be chosen by ballot, and continue in office three years.

8. The Recording Secretary shall keep a fair record of the doings of each meeting, in a book to be kept for that purpose, which shall be transmitted to his successor in office.

9. The Statistical Secretary shall collect and arrange such statistics as the Conference may order; shall distribute all documents received for the use of the Conference, or printed by them, and shall preserve a copy of all the publications of the Conference.

10. The Treasurer shall receive all money raised for the use of the Conference; disburse the same as directed, and present an annual report, audited as the Conference may direct.

11. Any ordained pastor or member of a Congregational Church within the bounds of the State, shall be eligible to the offices of Secretary, Statistical Secretary and Treasurer.

12. The Conference may receive delegates from other State evangelical religious bodies, representing Congregational Churches, who shall be con-

sidered honorary members, and be admitted to the privilege of participating in the deliberations of the meeting, but shall not be allowed to vote; and the Conference may reciprocate the courtesy by appointing delegates to such bodies.

13. Twenty-five regularly appointed delegates shall constitute a quorum.

14. The Conference shall hold an annual meeting on the second Tuesday in September, at such place as shall be designated, to commence at four o'clock, or other more convenient hour, in the afternoon, and to close at four o'clock in the afternoon of the Thursday following.

15. A sermon shall be preached on the evening of the first day of the meeting, and another, adapted to the occasion, on the afternoon of the last day, to be followed by the Lord's Supper, to be administered generally without remarks.

16. Brief narratives of the state of religion within the bounds of local Conferences, shall be presented in writing to a Committee appointed to receive them, which shall be embodied in a report and read by the Committee, at such time as the Conference may appoint.

17. Other services of the Conference shall consist of devotional exercises, addresses and discussions upon subjects of practical religious interest, together with the objects of benevolent enterprise, sustained by the churches, to be provided for, and arranged as shall be laid down in the By-Laws.

18. The Conferences shall establish By-Laws and Rules of Order for the regulation of its business, which shall be adopted by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any annual meeting.

19. Any proposition to alter or amend a By-Law shall be made at the annual meeting previous to the one at which it is acted upon.

20. Any article of this Constitution may be altered or amended by a two-thirds vote, at any annual meeting, provided, that the proposition is made at any previous annual meeting, excepting that *article third* shall be held unalterable.

BY-LAWS.

1. At the appointed hour of meeting, the Pastor of the Church where the meeting is held shall call to order; the certificates of delegates shall be immediately presented to the Recording Secretary, and a quorum being declared present, a Moderator shall be chosen.

2. The Moderator shall open the meeting with devotional exercises, and at the opening of each subsequent session, shall appoint some person to offer prayer.

3. A Committee of three shall be appointed to act as a Committee of Arrangements.

4. At each meeting, a Provisional Committee of five persons, shall be appointed to arrange the schedule for the subsequent meeting; to designate the place, and to nominate a preacher, for the opening sermon.

5. The preacher of the sermon before the communion, shall be chosen by the local Conferences, in alphabetical order.

6. In order to separate the business from the religious services, special times shall be designated, at which all business of the Conference shall be transacted.

7. Whenever it shall appear to the Committee appointed to embody the narratives of the state of religion, that the religious condition within any local Conferences justifies a more detailed recital, a delegate from every such Conference may make verbal statements to the meeting, under the direction of the Committee.

8. The Conference shall determine, by vote, what objects of Christian benevolence may from time to time be presented, and the particular objects to be presented at any meeting, shall be determined by the Provisional Committee.

9. The Constitution and By-Laws shall be read near the opening of the session, on the second day.

10. When a report is made, the question shall be, "Shall the report be accepted?" If resolutions are appended, the question may be divided at the request of any member, and the vote taken separately on accepting the report, and on accepting the resolutions.

11. The motion for "the previous question," shall be put without debate, and if carried, the main question shall be immediately put.

12. The Conference shall observe the usual rules of order in deliberative bodies, in all cases where it has no special rule of its own.

13. Before adjournment, the minutes of the meeting shall be read for approval.

REPORT ON THE STATE OF RELIGION

IN THE

CHURCHES CONNECTED WITH THE CONFERENCE.

The Committee of last year, in their Report, say, "In consideration of the recent organization of the Conference, the Committee are not disposed to speak of the failure of the District Conferences to send in written reports of the State of Religion, believing that the failures of this year will not occur again. We trust all the Conferences will be fully reported at the next meeting of this Body." Your Committee regret to say that this hope has not been realized; nor do they think it will be until the question is settled as to the union of the General Association and this Body. They are persuaded that as long as two bodies exist in the Commonwealth, to both of which the same reports are expected annually, the same difficulty will occur. Your Committee regret this failure the more, as a definite and full knowledge of the state of religion is a subject of the highest importance in securing the objects of the General Conference. We trust that a remedy for this evil will soon be reached.

From the reports which we have received we are warranted in saying that our churches are generally prosperous, and that they are vigorously employing the means of grace which God has afforded them for the extension of his kingdom and the glory of his name. Nor have they labored in vain—for though we are not permitted to report extensive revivals, still there have been some precious seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord in different portions of the State, which have cheered and comforted his people, and added many we trust to the number of his true disciples, and could we spread out in this report the details of God's movements in all our churches, we should doubtless have still greater cause of gratitude and praise to the riches of his grace, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

In Andover Conference some of the churches have been revived and strengthened. One of the smallest of the number has been blessed with ten hopeful conversions of an interesting character under the ordinary means of grace. Two or three of the larger churches have had additions of eight or ten each, and others of a smaller number; and several students of Phillips Academy have been hopefully converted.

Barnstable Conference, reports the past to have been a year of mercies to them. There have been interesting revivals in Chatham, South Dennis and Falmouth, and several cases of hopeful conversion in some other churches. In Chatham between twenty and thirty have united with the church, and about the same number in Falmouth have been brought hopefully to rest in Christ as their Redeemer.

At Milford, within the bounds of the Mendon Conference, there have been some fifty cases of hopeful conversion as the fruits of a work of grace enjoyed during the past winter and spring, twenty-five of whom have publicly professed their faith in Christ. There have been several cases of hopeful conversion in most if not all the congregations connected with this Conference.

At North Middleboro', within the bounds of the Taunton Conference, as the fruits of a precious work of the Spirit, there have been nearly one hundred brought, as they hope, to the saving knowledge of Christ, about sixty of whom are members of the Sabbath school—while the church is refreshed and strengthened. The church in Lakeville shared also in this Divine favor, and many souls were hopefully converted to the Lord.

In the congregation at Boxford, within the bounds of the Salem Missionary Union, there has been a deeply interesting work of grace; some twelve or fifteen have been hopefully brought to Christ, mostly from among the young.

In the Female Seminary at Mount Holyoke, within the bounds of the Hampshire East Conference, there has been a work of grace of marked and peculiar interest, resulting in the hopeful conversion of about forty pupils.

A work of grace of remarkable interest and power occurred in Plymouth and vicinity during the last spring. The whole community was moved by the Spirit of God. As fruits of this work, forty-eight have already united with the Church of the Pilgrimage, and others to other churches, so that now more than one hundred have been gathered into the visible church. Ten have been added to the church in Chiltonville, the first that have been added to that church for twenty years.

There has also been a work of grace in Marblehead, in Essex South Conference, in which there have been some thirty or forty conversions.

In a day of darkness and rebuke, when the nation is struggling for her life against the murderous assaults of unnatural sons, and Sabbath desecration and immorality as a consequence fearfully increase; when the ways of Sion throughout the land mourn as the young and the brave are called from her altars to oppose their breasts to the foemen's steel, and it may be to fall in the deadly breach; how comforting to our hearts for our covenant God thus to show us by unmistakable tokens that he has not forgotten to be gracious; but that he still walks in the midst of his churches, to strengthen, to bless and to save. It highly becomes us to thank God and take courage. "The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."

As usual these reports refer with deep interest to Sabbath schools, showing the strong hold these nurseries of the Church have on the hearts of God's people. They are every where prosperous, and engage the energies and the prayers of both pastors and people more and more, as God continues to show by his approving smiles that they are among his choicest means for the salvation of the soul, the perpetuation of his Church, and the extension of Christ's kingdom. In cherishing these institutions we are fulfilling the command of our Redeemer, "Feed my lambs"; thereby showing that we love him; and the fruits of our love and our labor in these nurseries of Sion will be among the richest of those which shall gladden our hearts in the Church above.

The subject of Home Evangelization, we take pleasure in reporting, is attracting the attention of our churches with new power and enlisting their energies afresh. The wide-spread desolations even in the land of the puritans, the vast numbers who are never seen in the house of God, teach us that if we would fully obey the last command of our risen Lord, we must cultivate the great field at our own doors, until the wilderness shall blossom as the rose. Two of the local Conferences, the Norfolk County and Pilgrim, have set a good example in this direction. Finding within their bounds a destitute region of one hundred families having no place of worship, they took immediate measures to furnish them with God's appointed means of grace. A congregation has been gathered, a Sabbath school of fifty scholars established, and a minister located among them who preaches to them the Gospel of Jesus. We trust that the reports next year will show similar movements in all the destitute regions in the Commonwealth.

Although unusual calls have been made upon our churches the past year, and liberal contributions have been repeatedly made for the com-

fort of those who are defending our Government, and especially when sick and wounded; still we do not learn that the general objects of Christian benevolence are losing their hold upon their sympathies and efforts. Few, if any, statistics have been furnished us by which we can judge of the comparative amount contributed, though we hope there has been no serious diminution. In some localities our churches have suffered more heavily than in others—though all parts of the land have been stricken—and are consequently less able than formerly to contribute largely to those objects so dear to their hearts. But we trust this is temporary, and when the pressure, in God's own good time, shall be removed, their hearts of love will be gratified with the return of ability to do all that their deep sympathies for Christ and his cause shall dictate.

The reports contain expressions of the deepest sympathy with our beloved nation in this her dark hour, rent with civil feud and drenched with fraternal blood, and of the firmest determination to stand by her in this struggle to crush this wicked rebellion, making all the sacrifices and performing the labors necessary to sustain the Government to the last, to reëstablish the authority of the Constitution over all the States of this Union, and consolidate the union of the Fathers more firmly than ever. Such patriotism is worthy of Christian freeman appreciating the blessings which they enjoy. Already our churches have made great sacrifices in this struggle. They have sent forth their sons by hundreds and thousands, the young, the manly, the brave, to defend our institutions, and to die if God should call them to it in that sacred defence. And many of them have died in that defence. Many a home is filled with mourning, lamentation and woe; many a heart is crushed and bleeds because Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and yet such is the deep and ardent love of country that the crushed heart rises superior to its grief, brushes away the falling tear, and pronouncing the parting benediction upon Benjamin's head, sends him away also to the same struggles and it may be to the same death.

As the darkness thickens, and the conflict becomes more terrific, and hope is deferred, our churches cast themselves more entirely on God, feeling that in him alone is their hope,—that, "God only is great." To him Christians commit the nation, knowing that he will guard the precious interests with sacred care; hoping that when he shall by his chastisements for our sins have led us to deep humility and true repentance, then will he bring deliverance and salvation. But if for our great and manifold sins, amid so many abounding mercies, God shall destroy the nation, they will acknowledge the doom to be justly de-

served, and exclaim, "Who will not fear thee, thou king of nations!" Thus believing, hoping, fearing, trusting, Christians will come out of this dread struggle with their graces more fully developed, their Christian character more beautiful in its proportions, and they the better fitted to glorify God their Saviour forever.

Our churches have been called to mourn the death of some of the fathers and brethren in the ministry since the last Conference. Three of them from the bounds of one Conference, Brookfield, one of whom was the venerable Dr. Thomas Snell, honored and loved by all our churches through a long course of years. These, with many members of our churches, have ceased from their labors and struggles, and entered into their rest. Before another annual gathering many of us in all probability will be called to give account of our stewardship. May we be made more like our Master, by a deep and habitual communion with his heart of love and his life of consecration to the service and glory of God, so that when we are called to meet the Lord, his approving smile may rest upon us.

The year is before us; what it has in store for our country, our churches, and the world, God only knows. At present the prospect, as to our beloved country at least, is portentous and fearful. But the Lord reigns, and his church is safe. May he pour his spirit upon us, that we may be fitted for the duties and trials which await us, for the sake of Him whose we are, and whom we serve. "The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our Refuge."

B. R. Allen,
Hiram Mead,
Charles Scudder,
Committee.

ESSAY.—No. 1.

BY REV. WILLIAM BARROWS, READING.

IN WHAT WAYS SHALL THE TENDENCY TO SABBATH DESECRATION BE RESISTED?

I am requested by the Committee of Arrangements to furnish "an Essay of fifteen or twenty minutes long on this question." The Essay is designed, I suppose, to afford a good starting point for the discussion by the Conference of this important, and at the present time, peculiarly practical question.

The limits of time for the Essay, "fifteen or twenty minutes," and the time left me for its preparation (for I assume the duty at the last hour and as an extemporized substitute), will compel me to a naked and condensed enunciation of points.

Three preliminary remarks I deem pertinent.

1. *Sabbath breaking never isolates or separates itself from other violations of the moral law.* As a transgression of the moral law it is never solitary. In the feelings that prompt it, and in the acts that consummate it, many kindred vices and sins associate themselves.

2. *It is probably true that Sabbath-breaking rarely, if ever, gains a pre-eminence among the sins of a people.* It may obtain to more publicity as having more open characteristics than many other sins. At the same time it may have no greater prominence before God than other immoralities of the same people. This sin belongs to the gregarious class, in which class each sin is likely to hold its relative strength, and to increase or decrease in relative proportion. At this time Sabbath desecration has assumed an alarming prominence. But we must not suppose that other sins have remained stationary. Our social vices and the violations of God's positive precepts, have all kept rank and gone forward *pari passu*. The visible nature of Sabbath-breaking alone gives it prominence. Like the Nileometer, it shows the rise of the waters, not in one locality merely, but through the whole valley. The

tide of corruption has risen over all our fair fields. It shows itself on six other days as well as on the seventh. This alarming increase of Sabbath sins is only an index to a general new state of things.

3. *Then it is obvious that Sabbath desecration must be met and overcome in connection with several other sins of a social nature.* Of some of these it is the cause, and of others the effect, and sometimes it is the cause and effect of the same sin in different persons. The genealogy of Sabbath sin has no very clear line of pedigree. It is usually interwoven with and inseparable from such sins as disobedience to parents, theft, intemperance and licentiousness. As a sin having such complexity in its causes, relations, and effects, it cannot well be separated and set apart for successful solitary attacks. Pushing forward a single virtue beyond the flanking and supporting advance of other virtues does not accord with the divine tactics of the Church militant.

Christianity is a body of excellences. It grows as a whole, striving to keep its symmetry and proportions. So true is this, that one virtue petted and put forward in a person or community to the neglect of others, soon assumes the appearance of a defect. If all one's religion is absorbed by one habit, virtue, or excellence, it becomes a deformity. In reality it is found to be a fact that the observance of the Sabbath has never much preceded, nor yet much fallen behind a regard for the other commandments of the Decalogue. God did at first cut them all in inflexible stone, and set them in close relation to each other. So were they carried along together. We cannot much separate and press them singly through a community. They are to be driven abreast and not tandem.

With these three preliminary remarks, I now proceed to give a more specific answer to the question before the Conference.

1. *The tendency to Sabbath desecration should be resisted by a more thorough unfolding and enforcing of the divine obligation to observe the Lord's day.* At the bottom of much of the Sabbath desecration in New England there lies a profound scepticism as to the authority of the Christian Sabbath. It is regarded by many as Jewish in its beginning, and obsolete with Judaism. If this be so it is a mere matter of expediency how many days a man shall labor in doing all his work, and if he rest from labor on the seventh day, it is an open question what he shall do on that day. So long as the divine origin and perpetual and universal obligation of the Sabbath are open questions, the direct appeal from Sinai is weak. And there is not perfect unanimity even in our own Church on this point. Some argue for the Sabbath law on the

ground of utility alone, while they strip it of its divinity. This is grinding without the nether millstone. The kernel is not cracked.

Scepticism as to the universal and perpetual obligation of the Fourth Commandment is the Thoroughfare Gap through which the enemies of the Sabbath have come in so freely. This scepticism is of all shades. It is scholarly and unscholarly, vulgar and polite, flippant and jeering at all sacred things, as well as very pious and devout. To resist all this, the people must be gathered again at Sinai to hear all the words of this law. The present adult generations and the rising should listen again to the teachings of the fathers, as set forth in the thirty-ninth answer in the Shorter Catechism: "From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath: and the first day of the week since to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian Sabbath."

2. *The tendency to Sabbath desecration should be resisted by strictly confining our public assemblies on that day to religious ends and services.* God makes a clear line of division between secular and sacred time. We should keep as bold a distinction as possible between proper and improper gatherings and services for the Sabbath. Otherwise we make doubtful the intent, and so confuse and confound the keeping of the Sabbath. It is not every praiseworthy cause, even where it can frame some moral or religious appendix or relation for itself, that can properly claim a public hearing in holy time.

Public services on that day should be eminently religious, devotional, and spiritual. The Scriptures should have a large place in them as both suggesting and directing them. We favor the tendency to Sabbath desecration when we provide for, take part in, or attend Sabbath gatherings of an opposite character. Quasi religious and politico-moral assemblies on the Sabbath, leave its design in obscurity. A similar injury is done to the spirit of the day when we patronize Sabbath assemblies that are under the control of irreligious men. We also secularize the day and neutralize the commandments when we regard more the attractions, the amusement and the fascination of a Sabbath assembly than its religious impressiveness and its tendencies to vital godliness. Under this remark some of our Sabbath-school Concerts might be profitably over-hauled. We cannot enter into competition with unevangelical sects to see who shall draw the larger audiencies on the score of attraction. Nor ought we to be led into the folly of presuming that we can so secularize and popularize religion as to carry the masses. Such efforts profane the day, while in them the Church slides into the world.

3. *We shall resist this tendency to Sabbath desecration by using a good portion of the day in acts of public worship.* Some find it difficult to attend so many services, because of the distance or the weather, or because they have so little time, except on the Sabbath, to spend with their families, or in religious reading. Now it is a fact to be noticed that Sabbath desecration varies in any community in the proportion of attendance on public worship. Wherever the number of Sabbath services have been much reduced, Sabbath breaking has increased, and worldly recreations and amusements multiplied. The records of some of the old countries are a sorrowful testimony to this truth. These remarks have special pertinence to village and city life.

4. *We should resist this tendency by keeping our churches open through the hot season.* Undoubtedly pastor and people are benefitted by vacations, but no large portion of a congregation can have this indulgence at any one time. There will always be a large body in any one society who will need the usual Sabbath ministration. If poverty keep men at home, and the heats of the city oppress them, they still need the Gospel. If not furnished in the usual place there is a strong tendency to use the Sabbath as a substitute for the vacation that the more fortunate are able to enjoy elsewhere. With many, public worship has so much to do with Sabbath keeping, that when its regular ministrations are suspended, they lose their balance and guide and aims for holy time.

Dr. Beecher once remarked, when urging the policy of warming the house of worship, that freezing is not a means of grace. It seems to me that hot weather and the summer discomforts of a city life are no such guarantee for Sabbath observance that the ministration of holy things in it may be suspended till cold weather and the regular ministry return. I regard the habit of making our religious labors periodical and mostly in the winter months as closely connected with Sabbath profanation. Relaxing them exposes the Sabbath.

5. *We should resist this tendency by paying better attention to a neglected part of the Fourth Commandment*—"*Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work.*" Working in secular time is as obligatory as resting in sacred time.

The sluggard is a miserable Sabbath keeper, whether he be poor or rich. His idleness is a foe to grace and to the laws. On the other hand some overwork themselves in the six days. Men in city business with country residence are tempted to give themselves so totally to business that they have only the Sabbath left for social and family life. They plead the necessities of the family when they become half-day

hearers, leave the Sabbath-school, neglect the concerts and prayer-meetings of the church, have a sumptuous dinner, an afternoon ride, an evening walk, a good social time generally at home, or take the children and "go over to father's." Men should so use the six days that they can devote the seventh to God.

6. *We should resist this tendency to Sabbath desecration by abstaining from a class of personal pleasures on the Lord's Day.* I refer now to pleasure rides, evening walks, social calls, dining out, receiving friends by invitation, visiting camps, attending "sacred" readings, and concerts, and operas, strolling in cemetaries and discussing there anything but what pertains to death, sin, salvation, the judgment, and eternity. To urge such strict observance of God's day may sound Puritanical. But we are trying to get back nearer to Sinai, and Plymouth Rock lies in that range of mountains. Personal comfort, health, spiritual improvement, if you please, may be promoted in some by these indulgencies. But I think Paul did not consult his health when he spoke of things lawful but not expedient, and of not eating meat for a long time to come. These practices of some professing Christians furnish a warrant for the rudest and wildest liberty in desecrating the Lord's day.

7. *We should resist the tendency to Sabbath desecration by purifying our homes of secular reading on the Lord's Day.*

In earlier days, and when the Sabbath was better kept, this was an easy matter, for books, papers, and periodicals were then fewer and safer. Now they are multitudinous and dangerous, even as the Midianites and Amalekites encamped around Israel, "like grasshoppers for multitude." If the usual secular papers as the *Journal* and the *Ploughman*, and the literary miscellany, as *Harper*, and the *Ledger*, and the *Atlantic*, are to be common reading on the Sabbath, and if the books read are to be of the same general cast, it will be impossible to make the day remembered. And a greater care than has been exercised must be used in the selection and admission to the family of religious books, *so called.* There are too large meshes in the net-work that we set to keep secular books from floating along into sacred time under the title of religious. We have done esteeming a man religious because he calls himself so. It is high time we applied the same judgment to what asks and assumes to be Sabbath Literature. As with Jeremiah's fruit, it may all go under the general name of figs, but apparently sometimes the baskets change places: sometimes certainly they are poured together.

I cannot but think that much of the desecration of holy time can be traced to those earlier and formative influences in the family growing out of improper reading.

Books and papers totally distinct from the religious by confession, are common, while many that pass for religious are weak, sentimental, dramatic and worldly, with an interspersion of divine names, religious phrases, and lonely Scripture quotations. With such reading for the Sabbath, no child can be trained up to remember the Fourth Commandment.

8. *It will require much family religion on the Sabbath to save the day.* Sabbath desecration is largely on the increase, and an observer will notice that much of it is juvenile and youthful. It lies mostly this side the line of adult life. I have some doubt about the correctness of the position, but I incline to connect this increase of Sabbath violation with a falling off of religious family training since Sabbath-schools have come in and taken the place of parents in religious education. But be this as it may, no thorough and wide-reaching Sabbath reform will be carried that does not make its main work-field to lie among the children. To heal the waters of Jericho we must go back to the spring of those waters. In the family of children there should be the stated Biblical exercise on the Sabbath. If anything better than the "New England Primer" or the "Shorter Catechism" can be furnished, we shall all welcome it. But there should be a stated, serious, practical exercise on the history, doctrines, miracles, and practices set forth in God's Word. There is too much ground for the child's feeling that the Sabbath is to be kept principally at church, in the Sabbath-school, and at the Sabbath-school Concert.

When one comes to adult years the remembrance and the holy power of such a Sabbath evening in his childhood's home, will have more influence on him than an Astor Library of Sabbath documents. The stories of Abel and Enoch, and the Deluge and Sodom, of Isaac and Joseph, of Moses, Samuel, and Daniel, of Bethlehem, the Shepherds and the Manger, of the little ones whom Jesus blessed, and those who cried "Hosannah!" of Bartimeus, Jarius's Daughter, and the Widow of Nain, of Gethsemane, Calvary and the forsaken sepulchre,—these stories, told over and over, with proper application, in the ever-willing ear of childhood, with an ever-new interest, are the great forces to save our Sabbath.

But I do not propose to indicate all the ways in which we can resist the present alarming tendency to Sabbath desecration. The most obvious methods, and those within the reach of all, will doubtless prove the most profitable.

I have not suggested any organized and wide gathering system of forces for this work, feeling that simple methods within the reach of all

Christians would avail more than any complicated moral machinery that only a few salaried men could manage.

Doubtless the civil law can be used to effect in some cases. But it is a difficult and delicate thing, and requires great discretion to carry moral reforms by the force of civil law. The law may be used with effect against a Sunday liquor traffic; the crying of Sunday newspapers; Sunday theatres; "Sacred" concerts on Sunday evenings, and "sacred" Sunday railroad cars to accommodate all the Sunday business. But before the attempt is made to suppress all these Sabbath nuisances, the moral pulse of the community should be carefully felt, aud the atmosphere of the courts ascertained as well as the tone of the public press. For a law or legal action against such things is nothing when the popular will is not with the law and the prosecution.

It would serve this reform well to investigate the causes, sources, kindred vices, and curses of Sabbath-breaking, and then spread the facts before the community. Take the Sunday liquor traffic in its extent, its contempt of law, and its fruits of crime and pauperism, and irreligion generally. A fair investigation in any locality, city, or country, would furnish a record perfectly appalling to the community. So an investigation concerning Sunday theatricals, and concerts and pleasure-grounds, would astonish those who for years have followed only the beaten track between their own dwellings and the house of God. The statistics of Sunday travel on railways, wisely collated, might show the stockholders that the observance of the Fourth Commandment would diminish their sins and increase their dividends.

The first steps, through any organized action, would be the reconnoissance of the enemy's lines, and a collection and publication of the facts.

All labors of this kind, however, must go on the assumption that there is a strong body of the people loving the Sabbath with a godly affection, truly pained at its desecration as a sin against God, and thoroughly alive to its better observance.

And this leads me to my final remark which, it will be seen, completes a circuit, and falls in with one of the preliminary remarks. The Sabbath can be rescued and saved only by a more general prevalence of piety. We are not suffering under the increase of one sin only. Sabbath desecration is but an index—the more visible pointer on the moral dial. A general deterioration pervades the Christian body, which shows itself most easily in the sin in question. We can reduce this sin only in the proportion in which we at the same time reduce others. Our broadest, deepest, best policy, therefore, for the suppression of Sabbath-breaking, will be a more thorough, radical, well-proportioned and symmetrical piety in the Church.

ESSAY.—No. 2.

BY DFA. MILTON M. FISHER, MEDWAY VILLAGE.

THE OBLIGATION OF PRIVATE CHRISTIANS TO CARRY ON THE WORK OF HOME EVANGELIZATION BY MEANS OF SOCIAL INTERCOURSE AND THE HOLDING OF NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS.

The subject assigned to me on this occasion is "The obligation of private Christians to carry on the work of Home Evangelization by means of social intercourse and the holding of neighborhood meetings."

The obligation to promote the spiritual interests of men by means of social intercourse is very clearly enforced by the example and teachings of our Saviour.

He not only taught in the temple and synagogue on the Sabbath, but mingled with the people in all their social relations. He graced a wedding feast by his presence, and wrought *his first* miracle to provide for the customary entertainment of the guests. On other festive occasions he sat at meat with publicans and sinners—was the guest of the wealthy Zaccheus—often at the humble dwelling of Mary and Martha—and it was emphatically said of him, "He *went about* doing good."

He taught his disciples also that they should be "the salt of the earth"—the light of the world; and that their light must so shine *before men* that they may *see* their good works, and thus glorify their Father in heaven. They must be like *leaven* permeating the surrounding masses; must go into the by-ways and hedges and invite the poor and lame to attend the gospel feast.

These and similar precepts of Christ and of his apostles can never be obeyed by Christians except by *social contact* with men in the various relations of life.

Man is emphatically a social being; social intercourse is a necessity of his nature, and it must be employed to promote the great end of his

existence—to bring him into sympathy with Christ—to harmonize his own nature with the divine will.

Men untaught and unrenewed are alienated from God; between them and him there is a moral chasm, a broken link; sin has intervened and the spiritual current has been cut off and diverted. To supply this *broken link* and keep up a continual current of grace from the great battery of Christian truth to the hearts of men is preëminently a Christian labor.

In the transmission of electrical influence *contact*, continuous and perpetual contact is an essential condition—the least isolation or intervention of a foreign substance cuts off the communication. So Christians, who would be the medium of rich spiritual blessings to the world, must closely adhere to their fellow men in every walk of life.

They should associate with and aid them in their business relations, especially those living in the same community.

Although most Christians, like other men, bestow their patronage as they suppose their personal interest requires, yet are not men sometimes partially or wholly excluded from their patronage *simply* because they are not Christians, or belong to another sect, or attend another church? —and too regardless of the good of *other* communities, have not Christians sometimes sought so introduce Christian or sectarian physicians or artisans from *abroad*, rather than let their light *so* shine at home as to convert such as have always lived in their midst?

As by proper encouragement of domestic industry, we would seek as a nation to become independent of foreign labor to supply our temporal wants, so by similar encouragement the churches of Massachusetts should seek to produce their own *Christian* physicians, traders and artisans rather than import them, especially to the injury of other churches or communities.

A clannish or exclusive policy seldom fails ultimately to prejudice the cause of Christ, either by its temptation to a hypocritical profession for the sake of patronage, or to a settled and open aversion to all religion—it makes proselytes rather than Christians. By *dealing justly* and *liberally* in their business relations, Christians may honor their profession and may win men to Christ, no less than by "shewing mercy or walking humbly with God."

Christians should also associate with the world in the conduct of public affairs and social reforms. Political meetings have been too often denounced and shunned by Christians as unlawful assemblies, and just because the "salt of the earth" has not been more abundantly cast into these fountains of civil life and polity, streams of bitterness have often flowed from them.

The character of public men and their administration of public affairs materially affect the standard of public morals and the growth and power of Christian sentiment and institutions.

Civil government is ordained of God for the benefit of the race, and good men cannot with impunity refuse active participation in such measures as are needful to its proper administration.

Had the millions of professing Christians in our land carried the spirit of the gospel fully into its civil administration, and by their influence moulded and fashioned the institutions and laws of the several states and nation upon the great Christian principle of the *common brotherhood* of man, and his inalienable and God-given rights "to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," the present alarming crisis in our country's history had been averted.

But alas! "*the salt has lost its savor*,"—the NATION PERISHES—OR IS SAVED SO AS BY FIRE.

Local reforms of unquestioned importance have languished because Christians have stood aloof from contact and coöperation with men of benevolent impulses, and the strongest prejudices of many such men have been arrayed against ministers and churches for their refusal to join with them in specific efforts to banish intemperance, slavery and kindred evils from the land.

Sad indeed for the Church, when men outside of its sacred folds are more earnest and self-denying in prosecuting means to bless the poor, reclaim the wandering, and relieve the oppressed, than the professed imitators of Him "who had not where to lay his head."

The good Samaritan or the humane infidel is a better type of true religion with the masses, than either priest or people who *only fast and pray*—who worship God in the temple, but who fail to recognize his image in a wounded man by the way-side.

Besides associating with others in *organized* efforts to extend the various interests and charities of society, private Christians should especially associate with their neighbors in times of sickness and domestic affliction—should manifest their sympathy, by their presence, by proffers of personal service and pecuniary aid to such as need.

"Visiting the widows and the fatherless in their affliction," is as much a part of the gospel *now* as when enjoined by the apostle.

Christian women especially should become "*sisters of charity*," ministering to the comfort of the poor, the sick and afflicted in every community; and every church, through its various members, should provide clothing, conveyance and church sittings to all who for the want thereof fail to attend the sanctuary or the Sabbath-school. Whenever a new

family comes into their neighborhood, Christian families should seasonably call upon them, extend to them the courtesies of social life, and spare no pains to interest them in improving the means of grace.

Nothing more honors religion or those who possess it, or will more powerfully attract men to its ministrations, than for Christians of wealth and refinement frequently to visit the abodes of sickness and poverty, to mingle freely with their neighbors, exchanging calls and social visits with families and persons in less favored condition and worldly circumstances.

In large villages and cities particularly the courtesies and social amenities of life are often cliqued and graded, each person moving in a particular set or class, nor stepping from the circle except to reach a higher social position as soon as may be.

Should Christians sometimes reverse this order of things, in conducting their social and family intercourse, stepping out and stepping *down*, it may be, into other circles, *their contact* would tend to elevate others in the social scale, and would reflect much honor upon Him who though rich, humbled himself and became poor that others through his poverty might become rich in spiritual things.

As it respects his influence in the world, a Christian may sooner neglect the family altar or the closet, than refuse bread to the hungry or a cup of cold water to a brother man.

The world judge of men rather by what they *do*, than by what they *profess*, and so long as objects of *sense* are more easily apprehended than those of faith, religion will be more honored and promoted by the *patent* humanity, than by the *latent* piety of its disciples.

That theology which shall produce the highest type of manhood will most assuredly prevail.

Speculate as we may, *philanthropy, Christian philanthropy*, in the world's estimate, is the broad seal of the true faith. Through the divine blessing it is the key to open the hearts of men to the truth and to unlock the gates of heaven to a lost world.

Our Saviour says, "Love is the fulfilling of the law"; and the apostle truly says, "he that loveth not his brother whom he hath *seen*, how can he love God whom he hath *not seen*?"

Christians should associate with others and especially with the young in healthful recreation and innocent amusement.

There is a prevalent and obdurate impression, particularly in youth and early life, that religion is not really conducive to the highest degree of happiness in the present life; that it is a cold and gloomy element of character and society, imposing undue restraints upon the legitimate

exercise of the common sentiments and instincts of our nature. This impression Christians should seek to remove, not by a vigorous asceticism and a stoical indifference to all pleasurable sensations or emotions, not by a harsh and indiscriminating criticism upon all forms of amusements, but by their cordial approval of and cheerful participation in such as are innocent and healthful.

This subject demands more consideration than it has heretofore received, and that man or association who by the offer of a liberal premium or otherwise should secure the publication of such a treatise on the kind and degree of social amusements best adapted to the wants of the American people—such too as Christian parents and children may patronize and practice, and such as would tend to effectually banish all silly pastimes and hurtful recreations from the family and society, would be hailed as a Christian benefactor.

It is a matter that often perplexes the Christian parent, and little has yet been done practically to solve the difficulty. Some preachers and writers adopt one extreme, some another—many more are apparently indifferent, and all fail fully to meet a great practical necessity.

In the propagation of Christianity we must not ignore the various types and forms of social life, and must also bear in mind that these types and forms are constantly changing.

As a preacher would present and enforce truth in such forms of thought and speech and by such illustrations as are current and familiar to his audience, so private Christians in social life must adapt their intercourse with the world to meet the present phases of social life and character.

A countenance habitually sad and disfigured, or manners cold and stern even to haughtiness, are not suited to the tastes of a prosperous and democratic people.

General health and prosperity, universal education, civil freedom, moral and social culture, produce an air of cheerfulness, softer manners and lighter forms of speech than once prevailed in social life; and if Christians regulate their social intercourse by exactly the same rules as obtained in a ruder and severer age, no wonder our youth disbelieve the poet, who with more truth than poetry says

> "Religion never was designed
> To make our pleasures less."

Music and song, in every age, have exerted a mighty influence, both in social life and in national affairs. It is a power which Christians should patronize and cultivate as a religious duty. They should employ

it on occasions of social intercourse, to promote impressions that harmonize not only with the better feelings of our nature but with the spirit of the gospel.

Let the fair daughters of Christian parents dedicate their voices and their pianos to the service of God in the social circle. Let the doors of Christian parlors open wide to entertain the rich and the poor alike, and how soon would the feet of strangers "enter the courts of the Lord with thanksgiving and his gates with praise?"

It is not enough to erect temples of worship, furnish them with every convenience, and decorate them with artificial splendor; not enough to organize churches and Sabbath-schools, to support ministers and organists, choirs and colporteurs—these are but the machinery of the gospel, essential of course to its highest success;—but the motive power must be applied—Christians must carry religion into the world, manifesting its fruits in their life—or the world will never enter the Church.

The vital current must flow from Christian hearts through all the veins of social life.

As man can better see the Deity when veiled in humanity—the Father in the Son—so the world more readily discerns the spirit and power of godliness when manifested in acts of true beneficence. These are the true type of the Christian mission—the only credentials the world cannot reject. They are visibly inscribed upon the miracles of our Saviour and upon every act of his life. Through the wants and infirmities of the flesh and the present life he reached and renovated the souls. The retributions of the final judgment are also represented as determined by our regard for these demands of our nature. In hunger and thirst, in sickness and in prison, the Judge inquires, have we ministered to a common humanity?

"By their fruits ye shall know them." The last verdict will harmonize with these words of our Saviour, and now and ever will they find a fit response in every human breast.

Would Christians secure for themselves and others "life everlasting," they should prove to the world by their own actual condition and deportment, the truth of Christ's declaration, that the gospel yields to its possessor "a hundred fold more in this life."

This is truly a practical age; things are valued according to their utility, and religion is no exception to the general rule. Although New England is the abode of "*isms*" and theoretical speculations, yet no people so readily or more generally apply their knowledge to practical life or are more influenced by results.

Christians should seize upon this element of character and make it subserve the cause of Christ.

They must convince the world that religion is a good investment—pays good dividends and pays them promptly; that the institutions of religion are worth being sustained by their substance and by their personal presence and attention. If such fruits of the Spirit as Christians ought to bring forth and manifest in the various scenes of social intercourse fail to lead men to use and appreciate the means of grace, the gospel is indeed a failure and man still without hope.

As a further means of extending the influence of religion, neighborhood meetings of a social religious character should be considered.

In neighborhoods remote from the place of public worship such meetings have been often held with beneficial results, and all such localities should be searched out, and meetings should be established and maintained by private Christians with such assistancë from pastors and licentiates as may be obtained.

And why too may not Christian families even, in villages and cities, open their doors occasionally for such a purpose? Why may not the social and religious element be combined in the conduct of evening parties? Why not appropriate some portion of the long evening extending often far into night, to religious conference and divine worship? If our Saviour could grace a banquet by his presence, would social worship be out of place amid costly viands and all the usual entertainments of an evening party in the most refined circles of society? It is a mistaken idea that all social religious meetings must necessarily be held in chapels and vestries—must be duly notified on the Sabbath—conducted with stereotype formality—of so many prayers, hymns, of so much Scripture, and exhortation.

There is a strong tendency in all religious observances to degenerate into formality; continued with unvaried sameness as to time, place, order and subjects, they lose their freshness and their effect. The mind abhors monotony no less than nature a vacuum.

Why not then exchange occasionally the central vestry for the rural district school-house, or both for the best rooms or parlors throughout the entire community or membership of the church?

Why not sometimes vary the method of conducting religious meetings of a social character? Why not present topics for social conversation or manly discussion, and develop the *latent* talent of the youth of both sexes in religious composition, declamation or debate?

Some seem to regard religion too much like a Sunday suit, too good

for every-day use, or too sacred to be mixed in with secular matters, however necessary to the well-being of society.

But why should the Church leave it to the school and the lyceum, the lodge and the division-room, exclusively to cultivate and direct the moral and the mental activities of these youthful members?

It is very evident the Church has failed to meet some of the demands of the present age, and because these demands have been partially met by other institutions, their success should neither be envied nor their utility questioned till Christians have brought up the Church to do all its appropriate work.

Society often becomes like some soils, so crusted over as to be unproductive without being broken up.

Men of genius are constantly inventing new applications of natural laws to promote the convenience and progress of society. The same genius, baptized by the Holy Ghost, should be employed to devise new applications of divine truth to promote higher spiritual results.

The love of novelty and change is not always to be repressed. While everything else, both in society and nature is constantly changing, some change in method and application is absolutely essential to progress in religion.

Some good men are alarmed at many changes that have occurred within the present century. Because a less proportion of our population attend public worship than formerly, they infer that the power of truth is practically less effective—that society is surely drifting to a state of heathenism or atheism.

They fail to consider that once, the felt want of social intercourse and the lack of all other means of public instruction except the pulpit, brought all men good and bad to the sanctuary on the Sabbath—that now by the increased density of our population, by public lectures and the teeming press, this lack and want are supplied outside of the pulpit and the sanctuary—that some of the social and even spiritual wants of our nature are met in the various humane and reformatory associations that exist in every community.

Although non-attendance upon public worship is an alarming evil, yet the comparison with other times often instituted is no real test of the comparative prevalence of true piety, and furnishes no ground of discouragement or valid reason for a return to a former condition of society.

On the contrary, in the midst of all these outside attractions and influences, instead of regret and complaint, it is a matter for gratitude to

God, that the pulpit and the sanctuary are not deserted, but hold so high a place in the affections of our people as a means of knowledge and of grace, and that the spirit of the gospel to such a degree moulds and fashions the institutions and forms of social life.

To make these forms minister more fully to the spiritual wants of men personally, so that the gospel shall be preached to every creature, Christians, in the spirit of their Divine Master and in humble imitation of his example, must freely associate with all men and everywhere.

They must enter the various circles of active life, participate with the world in trade and business, in politics, in education and reform, in festivities and recreations, in social parties and family visits, in scenes of sickness and of sorrow, in camp and in the battle-field—making all agencies, influences and elements of society and nature subserve as far as possible to bring all men more directly under the saving influence and power of divine truth.

ESSAY.—No. 4.*

BY BRO. JOSEPH S. ROPES, ROXBURY.

INTEREST AND USEFULNESS OF SABBATH SCHOOLS DEPENDENT ON PERSONAL FAITHFULNESS AND THE STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES ON THE PART OF TEACHERS, RATHER THAN ON GENERAL EXERCISES.

CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,—Having been called suddenly and unexpectedly to introduce a subject of the highest importance, I cannot hope to do more than indicate briefly and imperfectly the principles which in my apprehension lie at its basis and should determine our conclusions.

For the purposes of this discussion I may with sufficient accuracy define the Sunday-school as a method of Christian instruction and public worship specially adapted to the young. Its analogy with the public services of the church is therefore obvious, and the difference of its external forms from those of the sanctuary is merely such as the wants of the young may be supposed to require. We may therefore safely assume that the principles which ought to govern the one, should also be applied to the other.

Now in both these classes of public services there are two opposing theories, or rather tendencies, based on widely different premises, which preponderate more or less at different times and places. According to the one, inasmuch as men are to be saved "by the foolishness of preaching," i. e. by sermons, the great point to be gained is to induce them to come together to hear sermons of every possible description, doctrinal, practical, metaphysical, argumentative, polemical, and if there be any other kind inculcating sound doctrine; and this not only in one part of the service, but in all: sermons in the hymns, the prayers, the reading of Scripture, the very benediction—nay if the walls could be made to

* The third Essay is necessarily omitted on account of the ill health of the author.

speak, there would surely be "sermons in stones and good in every thing."

But as the natural heart has no taste for sermons and will not ordinarily endure sound doctrine, something must be done to induce it to listen to the preaching, which through the power of Him "who alone worketh great marvels," is able to save the soul. To this end the sanctuary must be made attractive—not, it is true, or not generally in our denomination as yet, by the splendor of Gothic architecture, or florid ornament, or exquisite paintings, carvings and other works of art—but by the more comfortable appliances of a well-warmed, well-lighted, well-cushioned and carpeted house, rich organs, artistic choirs, popular and eloquent preachers—the church thus "becoming all things to all men, if by any means she may save some."

The same tendency is naturally developed in the Sunday-school, which is the offspring of the Church. It is true that for obvious reasons an adequate supply of sermons cannot be provided; but for this an efficient substitute has been found in that admirable compendium of sound doctrine, The Westminster Assembly's Shorter Catechism, followed by other catechisms and question-books innumerable. The careful and laborious study of these, the committal to memory of numerous portions of Scripture, and the collection of texts in proof of certain specified doctrines, have usually formed the staple of Sunday-school instruction. To make the exercises attractive, and to induce children to submit to salutary discipline various contrivances have been resorted to. Much has been accomplished by the principle of emulation; in many cases direct rewards, as of a handsome bible or hymn-book, have been offered for continuous industry; the love of intellectual discussion and research has been not unsuccessfully appealed to; and of late years a new and rich mine of Sunday-school experience has been opened by the introduction of a style of hymns and music, with lively choruses, peculiarly suited to arouse and give vent to youthful enthusiasm. We are thus forcibly reminded of the diet adopted for their children by certain well-meaning parents, who, having loaded their infant stomachs with the richest and most concentrated nutriment, feel constrained to add a plentiful supply of condiments and stimulants, to enable the hard-tasked digestive organs to fulfil their duty.

This system (if it may be called one) so far as it involves an activity merely physical and intellectual and a moral passivity, appears to me equally at variance with Scripture and with common sense. The true theory of all religious instruction, so far as I can gather it from the example and precept of the Word of God, is the direct opposite of the

supposition that any external appliances, physical or mental, however elaborate and systematic, have any peculiar efficacy assigned to them in the economy of grace. We might as well believe in baptismal regeneration as in conversion by catechisms and texts which a child does not understand, or doctrinal discussions which it does not feel. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness," and "my son, give me thine heart," is the language of God to the child also. The Bible proceeds on the presumption that men possess instincts and affections made to be fixed on God, and capable of being directed towards Him, though perverted by sin. To preach the gospel effectively is to employ all the resources of argument and persuasion to induce men to do this, submitting their perverse will to the influence of the Divine Spirit. In other words, it is to "pray men in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God."

Now it will hardly be disputed that the affections and instincts to which the Gospel is addressed, are as real and as accessible in the child as in the man. They are in fact much more so, for sinful habit and the hardening influences of the world have not so far perverted them. To them the ideas of a father, of daily dependence on him, of obedience and approbation, of disobedience and displeasure, pardon and reconciliation, are daily and tangible realities. Their daily life is thus a continual sermon, and all they need is to make the application. The mysteries of doctrinal theology, the metaphysical subtleties of catechisms and the din of polemics are not for them. It is their privilege to "receive the kingdom of God as a little child," to feed upon "the sincere milk of the Word," to be gently led "in green pastures and beside still waters."

Where then lies the chief difficulty in educating children for heaven? Evidently in the same direction as in educating them for this life—not so much in inducing them to receive the truth, as in keeping it in contact with their minds, in overcoming the natural levity and instability of childhood, and guiding their feet firmly and steadily in the paths of life. "Precept must be upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little." The teacher's doctrine must drop as the rain, his speech must distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass. He must rouse and cultivate the affections, and lay siege to the citadel of the heart. For this purpose he must not be content with a Sabbath hour, however earnestly employed; he must visit the homes of his pupils, and carry his sympathy into their every-day life, rejoicing with them in their joy, and weeping with them when they weep; in a word making them feel that he is their best friend, their wisest counsellor, their kindest helper. When he meets them on the Sabbath, it should be with an earnest conviction and a

definite practical purpose of duty. Knowing that they love and trust him, his whole soul is bent on leading them to love and trust the Saviour as he does. Out of the abundance of the heart his mouth will speak. No catechism and no question-book can bring home the realities of religion to his pupils' minds as his own living experience can do it. The tones of his voice, the glance of his eye, the familiar arguments and illustrations with which his earnest affection will supply him, will have for them an eloquence which no preacher could rival.

All this may appear to some very sentimental, vague and unsatisfactory. Where, they will ask, is the teacher, especially if not highly educated, to obtain material for such instructions, and who could carry them on for any length of time without producing sameness and disgust? The reply is obvious — we have in the Word of God an exhaustless mine of truth, so wisely and wonderfully arranged and adapted to every variety of mind, that the study of the longest life can develop but a small portion of its riches. The difficulty lies in our own carelessness or indolence. We are not straitened in God, but in our own souls. We hastily take in our hands, and cram into the memories of our pupils, masses of concentrated wisdom, which neither they nor we can appreciate or understand. We load their sluggish stomachs with rich nutriment, which remaining undigested, turns to poison. We give them "the pearl of great price" concealed in such a load of earth that they fail to secure it.

The remedy is a simple one. The Bible is a practical book, and it must be practically applied. Every word of it was in its time fraught with deepest interest to those for whom it was written. The lapse of time, the changes in language, manners and customs, and habits of thought, have as it were incrusted many portions of it, and obscured our sense of the fresh vitality which pervades every line, and of its perfect sympathy with human nature in every age. This difficulty can only be remedied by careful and patient study, which no teacher will grudge who duly honors his work, and which, permit me to say, brings its own rich reward. If you wish the words of Scripture to impress your pupils as they impressed those to whom they were first spoken, you must be able in some degree to transport them into the scenes and customs of the ancient oriental world. The broad pastures over which the Patriarchs wandered with their flocks, the steep and rugged mountains from which Jotham and David and Elijah addressed the people, the rich valleys and fertile plains of Canaan, the death-like desolation of the Dead Sea, all these and innumerable other features of Bible history must become familiar to the teacher, if he would make Bible

history interesting to his pupils. And not only these, but the manners and customs of the people to whom the Word of God first came, their history, every thing that may help to elucidate the meaning of those lively oracles which were committed to them, not for themselves only, but for us, on whom the ends of the world are come — all must be investigated, studied and used, to enable us to apprehend their full significance. And when thus much of preparation is obtained, it must be followed by the labor of careful analysis, comparison, consultation with other minds, and above all earnest prayer, that the simplicity and Divine wisdom of the Word may not be adulterated and obscured by the earthly vessel through which it must necessarily be conveyed. One hint I may perhaps venture to throw out more distinctly, which is this: Remember that the Bible was addressed for the most part to plain men and simple minds. Do not therefore try to worry a profound meaning out of plain language, or to detect a hidden mystery in a plain narrative. When you read the sublime prayer of the prophet: "O that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, as when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil,"— do not be content to remark, with Dr. Chalmers in his Scripture Readings, that some terrible convulsion of nature must here be indicated, but study the fullest accounts penned by eye-witnesses of volcanic eruptions, and then in your own earnest language describe to your pupils the thick, dark, cloudy pall covering the sky, rent by incessant forks of lightning, the continual fall of stones and ashes from above, the fiery streams of lava descending the mountain-side and rushing with fierce commotion into the sea; then show them how all this is pictured in this remarkable verse — take them in imagination to that dreary inland lake surrounded by the relics of volcanic action, and tell them, with fitting solemnity, the tale of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities round about them, "set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." When they read of Christ warning one of his disciples that Satan hath desired to sift them as wheat, do not puzzle their common sense by trying to make it out that that which is true and natural when spoken of a body of men collectively, can be made to apply to each of them individually. In expounding the parable of the unjust steward, do not allow them to suppose that the Great Teacher would commend as wisdom such conduct as would consign any modern defaulter to a prison. And so of innumerable other instances. Again, and this suggestion seems to me of the highest importance, let every portion of Scripture taught be subjected to the closest and most searching analysis. The pure gold of the Word of God may be beaten out to

an almost inconceivable extent, and yet every portion of the leaf shall be beautiful and valuable, both to the teacher and the taught. It is in fact the only way in which it can be permanently lodged in the infant mind. Such a passage as this: "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things"— may be made by proper analysis and illustration, questions and examples, to interest a class of children for weeks together. And the same is true of nearly every verse in the Bible.

Again, while the school-room cannot be a confessional, yet a wise and sagacious teacher, by careful observation, by apt illustration, by an adroit use of the third person, may so uncover the secrets of his own heart and elicit those of his pupils, as to make his weekly intercourse with his class a deep fountain of religious experience to himself and to them. Whatever objections may lie against "inquiry meetings" so called, (and they are serious ones,) here is a means of direct religious exhortation of the most unexceptionable kind, and where the Christian teacher from personal knowledge and experience may be said to have every advantage. Here, if ever, he must be wise to win souls.

But if Scripture is so valuable, why not commit it to memory? Undoubtedly, when it is a labor of love, but task work, like bodily exercise, profiteth little. To compel children to learn the Bible by heart against their will, is like compelling them to eat in season and out of season the best and most delicious food, thus leading them to regard it with aversion all their life long. A single verse, learnt willingly, remembered, loved and prized, is worth ten thousand learnt unwillingly and never received into the heart.

What advantage then hath the catechism? or what profit is there of question-books? Much every way, chiefly however for the benefit of the teacher. A question-book may greatly aid him by its suggestions, and serve as a basis for his pupils' study as well as his own. But it is his own mind, his own loving Christian heart, that must clothe these dry bones with sinew and muscle, and color and form, and breathe into them the breath of life, which through the Divine Spirit shall communicate life to the hearers. The value of the catechism, as a compendium of Scripture truth, is great and unquestionable. But judging from my own experience, I have strong doubts of the expediency of teaching it by rote to children. I well remember an experiment of one of the best of pastors and of men, who had brought the children of his flock to such proficiency in the Westminster Catechism that they could almost repeat

it backwards. He attempted to make them write out and commit to memory the whole mass of Scripture references appended to every question. It was a magnificent experiment, but it broke down by its own weight at the very outset:

"Magnis tamen excidit ausis!"

Now if religion has its origin in the affections, how can dry, abstruse statements of doctrine, necessarily unrelieved by illustrations or anything addressed to the feelings, promote the progress of religion in the infant mind? You may analyze the substances which feed the natural body, but when you have reduced them to their chemical constituents, will they nourish you as they did before? will they not rather turn to poison? The jewels of divine truth may be more conveniently classified and arranged for technical purposes in a catechetical form, but they are surely far more beautiful in the rich and varied setting of Oriental history, poetry and devotion, in which the Great Artist has placed them to be the beauty and the glory of all generations.

A catechism may indeed be profitably studied, but only with an amount of analysis and illustration which would require weeks and months to be devoted to a single question. It seems better to recur at once to "the sincere milk of the Word" than to expend our labors in diluting its more concentrated forms.

The principal plea for the method here recommended must of course be this, that it tends most hopefully to save the souls of the pupils. It engages their affection for their teacher, but above all for the truth of which he is the medium; for the Father, the Saviour, the Sanctifier, of whose Divine love he is the exponent. It enables him to preach to them at every point of contact, on the Sabbath and in the week. John Newton advised the children of his congregation to learn texts, that when it should please the Lord to convert them, those texts might be ready and available. But we would have children receive the Word of God and understand it and love it, that it may now and at once make them wise unto salvation.

Having premised this main argument, we may add that the method of combining routine lessons and dogmatic theology with a lively and boisterous style of singing or other exercises, by way of recreation, tends to develop irreverence of character and to harden the heart. As a people, we are already too prone to repress the emotions and even the affections of the heart, and to treat life as a dry, cold, hard field of business. Religion rightly taught would greatly modify this tendency and soften the angularities of our national character. But if we feed

youthful minds with the husks of polemical discussion and metaphysical definitions, we aggravate the defect referred to.

Again, "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of his saints, and to be had in reverence of all that are about him." But how can such reverence coexist with the boisterous tones of many of the singing choruses interspersed through the services of some of our schools? And even where the most solemn truths are expressed, if they are merely sung or recited as a matter of routine, must they not tend to harden the heart and leave the subject of religion further from the affections than ever?

Permit me, in conclusion, to illustrate and sum up these suggestions by a brief sketch of two imaginary Sunday School classes, in which the two tendencies described may be supposed somewhat more developed than in any existing schools.

In the first case the teacher arrives more or less punctually among his class, whose members for social purposes are early on the ground, and with whose active and noisy intercourse he does not attempt to interfere. The school is opened by some such hymn as the following:

"'Tis religion that can give
In the light—in the light—
Sweetest pleasures while we live
In the light of God.
'Tis religion must supply
In the light—in the light—
Solid comfort when we die
In the light of God.
Chorus: Let us walk—in the light—
Walk—in the light.
Let us walk in the light,
In the light of God."

sung with great enthusiasm. A chapter follows, read in a peculiar and semi-metrical manner. Then a prayer, not with, but for or at the children, possibly comprising a short sermon, and three or four times too long to be devoutly followed by them. Then the superintendent remarks: "Last Sunday we repeated texts containing the word *love* — we will now repeat some containing the word *hate;* and next Sunday, as we are much interested in war matters, we will have texts with the word *fight.*" The lesson now proceeds. It is the 5th chapter of Matthew. One of our class has learnt ten verses, another twenty, a third the whole forty-eight. All these are recited — the printed questions are rapidly gone over, followed perhaps, if the teacher is ambitious, by a kind of theological drill, and when the routine is completed,

the scholars betake themselves to their library books and papers, and the teacher to his own affairs. At length the bell rings, and another animated chorus winds up the exercises, as follows:

"We love to sing together
Our hearts and voices one,
To praise our heavenly Father
And his eternal Son.
We love, we love, we love, we love,
We love to sing together,
We love, we love, we love, we love,
We love to sing together."

Overflowing with animal spirits, the pupils disperse, making the streets vocal with their merry laughter.

A pleasing and exhilarating spectacle — but not necessarily religious training or Christian discipline. May there not be a more excellent way?

In my second supposed case the teacher comes early, and his class come early to meet him. He has been at their homes from week to week, and they have all learnt to know and love him. The interval before opening is spent in mutual kind greetings and inquiries made in low but cheerful tones. As the bell sounds, all are hushed. The hymn, the reading of Scripture, the prayer, all are short, but devout and such as every child can understand and join in. The lesson is the same 5th chapter of Matthew. The pupils are encouraged to commit it to memory only as fast as it is made plain to them, and no rewards are ever given for learning by rote. The teacher by skilful questions leads the children to explain how the multitudes came to follow Christ — why he went upon the mountain — what sort of a mountain it must have been — describes the country as well as he can — explains the primary and secondary meaning of "disciples" — shews how "poor in spirit" naturally means humble in mind — calls on them for examples of this Christian virtue — furnishes illustrations from Scripture, and supposes cases which he knows will touch closely their own daily experience — holds up Christ, the great exemplar of this and every virtue, and shews that pride was the condemnation of the devil. Easily, familiarly and affectionately he then presses upon them the need of daily humiliation for sin, and pardon through Christ the Saviour.

By this time perhaps the hour has expired, and he has got through but three verses out of forty-eight! Yes, but he has brought the truth of God into close contact, not with the imagination or the memory or the understanding only, but with the heart. He has made his pupils

feel that their Father in Heaven has put forth one more earnest claim on their daily service, and has set before them a task susceptible of immediate performance. In one word it is from first to last a practical lesson in Christian duty. The closing exercises of the school being such as to deepen this impression, the class will return home, not, it is true, shouting and laughing, but with a quiet peace and enjoyment, which to him who looks below the mere external surface of animal life, will be far more beautiful and valuable.

Brethren, I speak as unto wise men — judge ye what I say.

MINUTES

OF THE

GENERAL CONFERENCE

OF THE

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES

IN MASSACHUSETTS.

SEPTEMBER, 1863.

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WITH THE

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THE

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1863.

NOTICES.

THE meeting of the Conference in 1864 will be held in the Central Church, Fall River, commencing on Tuesday, the 13th of September, at 4 o'clock, P. M., and closing at 4 o'clock of the Thursday following.

Rev. Zachary Eddy, D. D., of Northampton, is elected the Preacher of the opening sermon.

The Brookfield Conference will furnish the Preacher of the Sermon which is to be delivered before the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

The Delegates to the next meeting of the Conference are reminded of the 16th article of the Constitution, which requires them to bring brief *written narratives* of the state of religion within the bounds of their several District Conferences.

It is desirable that the District Conferences, in choosing Delegates, "select one Clerical and one Lay Delegate from the number of those who attended the preceding year."

OFFICERS.

Recording Secretary.

Rev. JOSHUA W. WELLMAN, Newton.

Statistical Secretary.

Rev. JOHN L. TAYLOR, Andover.

Treasurer.

Bro. STEPHEN T. FARWELL, Cambridge.

Provisional Committee.

Rev. ELI THURSTON, Fall River.
Rev. MORTIMER BLAKE, Taunton.
Bro. CHARLES L. LOVERING, Taunton.
Bro. S. ANGIER CHACE, Fall River.
Bro. WILLIAM B. DURFEE, Fall River.

MINUTES.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES OF MASSACHUSETTS commenced its fourth annual session in the Central Church, Worcester, on Tuesday, September 8, 1863, at 4 o'clock, P. M.

ORGANIZATION.

The Pastor of the Church, Rev. Seth Sweetser, called the meeting to order.

A quorum being present, the Conference was organized by the choice of Bro. Charles Demond, of Boston, as Moderator.

The Moderator opened the meeting with prayer; after which half an hour was spent in devotional exercises.

Rev. Joshua W. Wellman was then re-elected Recording Secretary, and Rev. James P. Kimball was chosen Scribe.

Rev. William Barrows, Bro. Elijah D. Goodrich, and Bro. Stephen T. Farwell, were chosen a Committee on Credentials.

Rev. Seth Sweetser, D. D., Rev. Ebenezer Cutler, and Dea. William R. Thurston, were chosen a Committee of Arrangements.

Rev. Edmund K. Alden, Bro. Richard P. Waters, and Dea. Joseph N. Bacon, were chosen a Committee on Nominations.

The Committee on Credentials reported the following

ROLL OF DELEGATES.

Andover Conference:—

Bro. Nathan Allen, Lowell.
Dea. Peter Smith, Andover.

Barnstable County Conference:—

Rev. James P. Kimball, Falmouth.
Rev. George F. Walker, Wellfleet.
Dea. Lorenzo Eldred, Falmouth.

Berkshire South Conference:—

Rev. Lewis Pennell, West Stockbridge Centre.
Rev. George E. Hill, Sheffield.
Dea. Elias Wright, New Marlboro'.

Brookfield Conference:—

Rev. John Haven, Charlton.
Rev. Joshua Coit, Brookfield.
Dea. Henry Haynes, Sturbridge.

Essex North Conference:—

Rev. John Pike, Rowley.
Rev. Asa Farwell, Haverhill.
Dea. William Thurston, Newburyport.
Bro. Moses Howe, Haverhill.

Essex South Conference:—

Rev. James M. Bacon, Essex.
Rev. Isaiah C. Thatcher, Gloucester.
Dea. Jacob Perley, South Danvers.
Dea. Jabez R. Gott, Rockport.

Hampshire East Conference:—

Rev. Hiram Mead, South Hadley.
Rev. Samuel J. M. Merwin, South Hadley Falls.
Dea. Eleazer Porter, Hadley.

Mendon Conference:—

Rev. Jacob Ide, Mansfield.
Rev. Andrew Bigelow, Medfield.

Middlesex South Conference:—

Rev. Joshua T. Tucker, Holliston.
Rev. Edward S. Atwood, Grantville.
Dea. Peter Fay, Southboro'.
Bro. Edward C. Damon, Concord.

Middlesex Union Conference:—

Rev. William C. Jackson, Dunstable.
Rev. Edwin R. Hodgman, Westford.

Dea. Ephraim H. Harwood, Westford.
Bro. Samuel S. Haynes, Townsend.
Bro. William W. Davis, Acton.

Norfolk Conference:—

Rev. James P. Terry, South Weymouth.
Rev. Horace D. Walker, East Abington.
Bro. Ebenezer Alden, Randolph.
Dea. John W. Loud, Weymouth.

Old Colony Conference:—

Bro. Moses H. Swift, Marion.

Pilgrim Conference:—

Rev. Joseph Peckham, Kingston.
Bro. Henry B. Barstow, Hanover.

Salem Missionary Union:—

Rev. Allen Lincoln, Lynn.
Dea. William R. Putnam, Danvers.
Bro. Richard P. Waters, Salem.

Suffolk North Conference:—

Rev. Albert H. Plumb, Chelsea.
Bro. Elijah D. Goodrich, Cambridgeport.

Suffolk South Conference:—

Rev. Edmund K. Alden, South Boston.
Bro. Charles Demond, Boston.
Bro. Francis D. Ellis, West Roxbury.

Taunton and Vicinity Conference:—

Rev. Franklin Davis, Berkley.
Bro. Abraham Perkins, North Middleboro'.

Woburn Conference:—

Rev. William J. Batt, Bedford.
Dea. Oliver R. Clark, Winchester.
Bro. Josiah Norcross, South Reading.

Worcester Central Conference:—

Rev. William Phipps, Paxton.
Rev. William A. Houghton, Berlin.
Dea. Philip L. Moen, Worcester.
Bro. Calvin G. Howe, Rutland.
Bro. James H. Moore, West Boylston.

Worcester North Conference:—

Rev. John F. Norton, Athol.
Rev. John C. Paine, Gardner.
Dea. Abner H. Merriam, Templeton.
Dea. John A. Conn, Ashburnham.
Dea. Maynard Partridge, Royalston.

Worcester South Conference:—

Rev. Charles H. Pierce, Millbury.
Rev. Luther H. Sheldon, Westboro.
Dea. Leander Stockwell, Grafton.
Bro. David B. Winter, Northbridge.
Bro. Willard Judson, Uxbridge.

FROM CORRESPONDING BODIES.

Rev. John C. Holbrook, D. D., Gen. Association of Iowa.
Rev. Cyrus W. Wallace, Gen. Association of New Hampshire.

The Conference adjourned to meet at 7½ o'clock in the evening.

Tuesday evening. The Conference met according to adjournment. After devotional exercises, conducted by Rev. Elijah P. Barrows, D. D., of Andover Theological Seminary, a Sermon was preached by Rev. Julius H. Seelye, D. D., of Amherst College. Text, Matt. v. 48: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

SECOND DAY.

Wednesday, Sept. 9. The Conference resumed its session at 9¼ o'clock, A. M., and engaged in devotional exercises for forty-five minutes.

COMMITTEE ON THE STATE OF RELIGION.

Rev. Isaiah C. Thatcher, Bro. Elias Wright and Rev. James P. Terry, were chosen a Committee on the State of Religion.

FIRST ESSAY.

Rev. Ebenezer Cutler, of Worcester, then read an Essay upon the topic: "The Spirit of the Gospel illustrated in its tendency to Self-propagation."

A discussion followed, in which the Conference limited the speakers to five minutes each. The following brethren made addresses, viz: Rev. Elnathan Davis, Rev. Merrill Richardson, Rev. George N. Anthony, Rev. George Trask, Rev. William H. Beecher, Rev. Seth Sweetser, D. D., Rev. Elijah P. Barrows, D. D., Rev. William Souther, Rev. James O. Barney, Bro. Nathan Allen, Bro. Ebenezer Alden, Dea. Oliver R. Clark, Dea. Moses H. Swift, Rev. Eli Thurston, and Bro. Charles Demond.

BUSINESS.

At 12 o'clock, the Conference attended to business. Dea. Jacob Perley was appointed Auditor. Bro. Stephen T. Farwell, Rev. Joseph Peckham and Bro. Moses Howe, were appointed a Committee on Finance.

The Conference voted to listen to the claims of the Christian Commission at such time as the Committee of Arrangements may appoint.

The Treasurer, Bro. Stephen T. Farwell, made his Report, which was audited and accepted.

On the Report of the Committee on Finance,

Voted, That the Treasurer be authorized to notify the Scribes or Treasurers of the several Local Conferences, of the assessment, upon each Conference, of a sum equal to Fifty Cents for each Church; and to request those officers to collect the same immediately, and forward it to the Treasurer of the General Conference.

The Conference then took a recess till 2½ o'clock.

Wednesday, P. M., 2½ o'clock. The Conference met and spent half an hour in devotional exercises.

SECOND ESSAY.

An Essay was then read by Rev. Abijah P. Marvin, of Winchendon, upon the following topic: "The Christian Element essential to the truest Patriotism; or, the Gospel essential to the preservation of our Free Institutions."

A discussion then followed, conducted by Rev. Merrill Richardson, Rev. George Trask, Rev. William H. Beecher, Rev. Thomas N. Haskell, Rev. Edward W. Clark, Rev. Benjamin Woodbury, Rev. James P.

Kimball, Dea. William Thurston, Rev. Samuel J. M. Merwin, Dea. Eleazer Porter, Rev. Ebenezer Cutler, and Rev. Robert F. Lawrence, which was closed with Prayer by Rev. Cyrus W. Wallace.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOME EVANGELIZATION.

The Committee on Home Evangelization then reported through their chairman, Rev. William Barrows. The Report was accepted, and the Resolutions it contained were adopted.*

COMMITTEE ON HOME EVANGELIZATION.

Rev. William Barrows, Rev. James T. McCollom, Bro. Marshall S. Scudder, Dea. William Thurston, and Rev. Henry M. Dexter, were appointed a Committee on Home Evangelization, for the coming year.

PROPOSITION FROM THE GENERAL ASSOCIATION.

The Conference then listened to a Proposition for a Union of the General Conference and the General Association, presented by a Committee of the General Association through their chairman, Rev. Christopher C. Cushing.

The Proposition was as follows: "That the General Association of Massachusetts and the General Conference of the Congregational Churches of Massachusetts unite under the name of '*The General Association of Congregational Churches of Massachusetts;*'—that the membership of this body consist of two delegates annually appointed by each District Association of the State, and three lay delegates annually appointed by each District Conference in the State;—and that all other matters, as to the Constitution and Rules of the body, be left to be arranged by the body itself, after such union shall have been formed."

The following Committees were appointed.

PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE.

Rev. Eli Thurston, Fall River; Rev. Mortimer Blake, Taunton; Bro. Charles L. Lovering, Taunton; Bro. S. Angier Chace, Fall River; and Bro. William B. Durfee, Fall River, were appointed Provisional Committee.

COMMITTEE ON THE STATE OF THE COUNTRY.

Rev. Luther H. Sheldon, Rev. George E. Hill, Dea. William Thurston, Dea. Oliver R. Clark, and Dea. William R. Putnam, were appointed a Committee on the State of the Country.

* See Report and Resolutions published in full with these Minutes.

The Conference then took a recess till 7½ o'clock.

Wednesday evening. The Conference met according to adjournment. After Prayer by Rev. P. D. Gurley, D. D., of Washington, D. C.,

Voted, That when we adjourn, it be to meet to-morrow morning, at 8½ o'clock, to transact unfinished business.

A discussion then followed upon "The value of established religious principle to young men;" opened by an address by Bro. Joseph White, of Williamstown, and continued by Bro. Alpheus Hardy, of Boston, Rev. Samuel J. Spalding, D. D., Rev. Cyrus W. Wallace, Rev. Charles Webster, Rev. William Barrows, Rev. Preston Cummings, Bro. Charles Demond, and Rev. Albert H. Plumb.

After an anthem by the choir, the Conference adjourned.

THIRD DAY.

Thursday morning, September 10. Met according to adjournment. Bro. Ebenezer Alden offered prayer.

UNION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE AND THE GENERAL ASSOCIATION.

The following Preamble and Resolutions were adopted in response to the Proposition of the Committee of the General Association.

Whereas, The General Association of Massachusetts has submitted a proposition to unite permanently with this Conference on certain conditions; and

Whereas, For many reasons, such a union seems to be both expedient and desirable—

Resolved, 1. That this Conference appreciate the motives which have led to the proposition, and will most cordially unite in any measures necessary to the consummation of such union, whenever the Association will so modify their proposition as not to involve any fundamental change in the fourth article of our Constitution, which requires all the members, pastoral and lay, to be delegates of the Churches.

Resolved, 2. That a Committee of five members be appointed to present these Resolutions to the General Association at their next meeting, and confer, if requested, with any Committee of that body, which may be appointed for that purpose.

Bro. Ebenezer Alden, Rev. Joshua W. Wellman, Bro. Nathan Allen, Rev. Henry M. Parsons, and Dea. Oliver R. Clark, were appointed the Committee.

Half an hour was spent in devotional exercises, conducted by Rev. Elijah P. Barrows, D. D.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE STATE OF RELIGION.

The Conference then listened to the Report of the Committee on the State of Religion, which was accepted.

REPORTS OF DELEGATES FROM CORRESPONDING BODIES.

Rev. John C. Holbrook, D. D., from the General Association of Iowa, and Rev. Cyrus W. Wallace, from the General Association of New Hampshire, presented the fraternal salutations of the bodies they represented. The Moderator replied.

Rev. William Barrows reported his attendance as delegate at the General Conference of Maine.

THIRD ESSAY.

At 10¾ o'clock, A. M., an Essay was read by Bro. John Aiken, of Andover. Subject: "The Reliance of the Church upon the Established Means of Grace for the Promotion of Religion."

The subject was then discussed by Rev. Richard Knight, Rev. John L. Taylor, Bro. Joseph White, Rev. David Metcalf, Rev. P. D. Gurley, D. D., Rev. Edward W. Clark, Rev. John O. Means, and Rev. William H. Beecher.

THE CHRISTIAN COMMISSION.

The Conference then, in accordance with a previous vote, listened to a presentation of the claims of the Christian Commission by Bro. Charles Demond.

PUBLISHING COMMITTEE.

Voted, That the Narrative of the State of Religion, the Report of the Committee on Home Evangelization, and the Essays read before the Conference, be published, and that the Recording Secretary and the Treasurer constitute the Publishing Committee.

VOTE OF THANKS.

On motion of Rev. Joshua T. Tucker, the following Resolutions were unanimously adopted:—

Resolved, That the thanks of the Conference be tendered to Charles Demond, Esq., for the marked efficiency and Christian courtesy with which he has presided over the deliberations of this body.

Resolved, That we express our acknowledgments to the Pastor of the Central Church and its Committee for the excellent arrangements which have

contributed so greatly to the usefulness and enjoyment of our meeting; to the people of Worcester who have so kindly extended their hospitalities to us and our friends; to the choir of this parish for their appropriate services; and to the Railroad companies which have furnished return tickets to members of Conference passing over their roads.

PLACE OF MEETING IN 1864.

Voted, That the next Annual Meeting be held with the Central Church, Rev. Eli Thurston, Pastor, in Fall River.

PREACHER FOR 1864.

Voted, That Rev. Zachary Eddy, D. D., of Northampton, be invited to preach the opening Sermon at the next Annual Meeting of the Conference.

DELEGATES TO CORRESPONDING BODIES.

The following Delegates to Corresponding Bodies were appointed:

To the General Association of Iowa:
Bro. Charles Demond.

To the General Conference of Maine:
Dea. Daniel Adams.

To the General Association of New Hampshire:
Rev. Seth Sweetser, D. D.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE STATE OF THE COUNTRY.

The Committee on the State of the Country presented the following Resolutions, which were accepted.

Resolved, That the success with which the Lord of hosts has recently crowned our arms, upon the land and the sea, calls for, and awakens in our hearts, devout gratitude to our father's God and ours; and that, in view of what he has done for us towards suppressing the most wicked rebellion in human history, as well as the justice of our cause, we are encouraged to pray that the blessing of heaven may attend the efforts of our Government, until its rightful authority shall be established over every foot of our territory.

Resolved, That we tender to the President of the United States, in his position of unparalleled responsibility and trial, our most cordial sympathy; that we have confidence in his wisdom and integrity; that we are gratified by his open recognition of the Christian religion as the basis of national morality and public duty; and that we will bear him in our hearts when

we approach the throne of grace, imploring the King of nations so to guide and direct our affairs, that he may be the honored instrument of effecting a righteous and permanent peace.

Resolved, That time and events have justified the policy of the Emancipation Proclamation, as we trust it has contributed to the continuance of our peaceful international relations, as it has added breadth to the moral basis for the continuance of the war in which we have been involved by this wicked rebellion, and also as it cripples the energies of our enemies, while it adds a vast force to our Government; and that we rejoice in the firmness of the President in adhering to this righteous policy.

Resolved, That the promptness of our soldiers in enlisting, their perseverance and patience in marches and sieges, their valor in the fight, their clear perception of the nature of the conflict, their ready obedience to the demands of discipline, and their unflinching support of the Government of our country — in all these regards exhibiting a spirit of high resolve and patriotic devotion unequalled in the history of nations — demands and receives our highest admiration.

Resolved, That we tender our Christian sympathy to the soldiers who are suffering from wounds and diseases, brought upon them by engaging in their country's service; that our hearts bleed in common with all those fathers and mothers, those wives and children, who have been called to lay their brave and loved ones in the dust; and that we will direct them for consolation to Him who maketh "all things work together for good to them that love God."

Resolved, That the conduct of our fellow-countrymen, the colored people of the land, both bond and free, in resisting all temptations to insurrection and useless violence; in preserving their tried and unanimous spirit of loyalty to the Union; in promptly responding to the call upon them to use the spade, the axe, or the rifle in the defense of our country; and in exhibiting the most heroic courage in the "imminent deadly breach," justifies all the confidence which their friends have reposed in them, and inspires the hope that they will soon obtain that liberty and that *status* in our country, which the principles of our Government, and of the gospel of Christ, alike demand should be accorded to them.

The Minutes were read and approved.

Voted, That after the Communion service in the afternoon, the Conference be adjourned, *sine die*.

Thursday, P. M. The Conference assembled at 2¼ o'clock, for public worship and the observance of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The devotional services before the Sermon, were conducted by Rev. Amos E. Lawrence. The Sermon was preached by Rev.

Nathaniel H. Eggleston, from Hebrews v. 7—9: "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard, in that he feared; though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."

Rev. Edward Dowse and Rev. Albert H. Plumb officiated at the Lord's Table. After which, in accordance with a previous vote, the Conference was adjourned, *sine die*.

CHARLES DEMOND, *Moderator*.

JAMES P. KIMBALL, *Scribe*.

A true copy of the Minutes.

Attest, JOSHUA W. WELLMAN,
Recording Secretary.

CONSTITUTION.

1. This body shall be called the GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES IN MASSACHUSETTS.

2. The object of this Conference is to secure Christian union, fellowship and intercourse among the churches; to promote spirituality; incite to a more elevated piety, and stimulate Christians to greater activity and efficiency in advancing the Redeemer's kingdom.

3. This Conference shall, under no circumstances, exercise ecclesiastical authority, or interfere with the government or discipline of the churches, or consent to hear appeals, or give advice in ecclesiastical causes of any kind.

4. Each Local Conference, composed of evangelical Congregational Churches within the State, may appoint five delegates to attend the annual meeting of the Conference, two of whom shall be pastors of churches, and three lay members.

5. The officers of the Conference shall be a Moderator, a Recording Secretary, a Statistical Secretary, and a Treasurer.

6. The Moderator shall be chosen by ballot from among the delegates present, and shall preside during the meeting for which he is chosen.

7. The Secretaries and Treasurer shall be chosen by ballot, and continue in office three years.

8. The Recording Secretary shall keep a fair record of the doings of each meeting, in a book to be kept for that purpose, which shall be transmitted to his successor in office.

9. The Statistical Secretary shall collect and arrange such statistics as the Conference may order; shall distribute all documents received for the use of the Conference, or printed by them; and shall preserve a copy of all the publications of the Conference.

10. The Treasurer shall receive all money raised for the use of the Conference, disburse the same as directed, and present an annual report, audited as the Conference may direct.

11. Any ordained pastor or member of a Congregational Church within the bounds of the State, shall be eligible to the offices of Secretary, Statistical Secretary and Treasurer.

12. The Conference may receive delegates from other State evangelical religious bodies, representing Congregational Churches, who shall be considered honorary members, and be admitted to the privilege of participating in the deliberations of the meeting, but shall not be allowed to vote; and the Conference may reciprocate the courtesy by appointing delegates to such bodies.

13. Twenty-five regularly appointed delegates shall constitute a quorum.

14. The Conference shall hold an Annual Meeting on the second Tuesday in September, at such place as shall be designated, to commence at four o'clock, or other more convenient hour, in the afternoon, and to close at four o'clock in the afternoon of the Thursday following.

15. A Sermon shall be preached on the evening of the first day of the meeting; and another, adapted to the occasion, on the afternoon of the last day, to be followed by the Lord's Supper, to be administered generally without remarks.

16. Brief narratives of the state of religion within the bounds of local Conferences, shall be presented in writing to a Committee appointed to receive them, which shall be embodied in a Report and read by the Committee, at such time as the Conference may appoint.

17. Other services of the Conference shall consist of devotional exercises, addresses and discussions upon subjects of practical religious interest, together with the objects of benevolent enterprise, sustained by the churches, to be provided for, and arranged as shall be laid down in the By-Laws.

18. The Conference shall establish By-Laws and Rules of Order for the regulation of its business, which shall be adopted by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any annual meeting.

19. Any proposition to alter or amend a By-Law shall be made at the annual meeting previous to the one at which it is acted upon.

20. Any article of this Constitution may be altered or amended by a two-thirds vote, at any annual meeting, provided that the proposition is made at any previous annual meeting, excepting that *article third* shall be held unalterable.

BY-LAWS.

1. At the appointed hour of meeting, the Pastor of the church where the meeting is held shall call to order; the certificates of delegates shall be immediately presented to the Recording Secretary, and a quorum being declared present, a Moderator shall be chosen.

2. The Moderator shall open the meeting with devotional exercises, and at the opening of each subsequent session, shall appoint some person to offer prayer.

3. A Committee of three shall be appointed to act as a Committee of Arrangements.

4. At each meeting, a Provisional Committee, of five persons, shall be appointed to arrange the schedule for the subsequent meeting; to designate the place, and to nominate a preacher, for the opening sermon.

5. The preacher of the sermon before the communion, shall be chosen by the local Conferences, in alphabetical order.

6. In order to separate the business from the religious services, special times shall be designated, at which all business of the Conference shall be transacted.

7. Whenever it shall appear to the Committee appointed to embody the narratives of the state of religion, that the religious condition within any local Conference justifies a more detailed recital, a delegate from every such Conference may make verbal statements to the meeting, under the direction of the Committee.

8. The Conference shall determine, by vote, what objects of Christian benevolence may from time to time be presented, and the particular objects to be presented at any meeting, shall be determined by the Provisional Committee.

9. The Constitution and By-Laws shall be read near the opening of the session, on the second day.

10. When a report is made, the question shall be, "Shall the report be accepted?" If resolutions are appended, the question may be divided at the request of any member, and the vote taken separately on accepting the report, and on accepting the resolutions.

11. The motion for the "previous question" shall be put without debate, and if carried, the main question shall be immediately put.

12. The Conference shall observe the usual rules of order in deliberative bodies, in all cases where it has no special rule of its own.

13. Before adjournment, the minutes of the meeting shall be read for approval.

REPORT ON THE STATE OF RELIGION

IN THE

CHURCHES CONNECTED WITH THE CONFERENCE.

In reporting upon the state of religion in the Churches connected with the Conference, your Committee are to be guided entirely by the narratives given by the local Conferences. If they are comparatively few and meagre, the general Report can neither be full nor particular. These are furnished us for collecting materials showing the state of religion connected with our churches in the Commonwealth. There are thirteen reports, from twenty-three District Conferences. If this feature in our services shall prove of interest and be productive of good, it seems needful to secure a more general report.

From what we are able to gather by the means afforded, it is evident that the churches are generally in a very prosperous condition. Some, during the year that is past, have been greatly refreshed by the revival of God's grace and the conversion of souls, and seem to be holding on to the form of sound words, while contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.

The various causes of benevolence have been cheerfully and liberally responded to, showing in a measure the practical working of the truth, that it is required of stewards that they be found faithful, and that it is more blessed to give than receive.

The subject of temperance, though perhaps not receiving all the attention it righteously demands, has still a strong advocate in all the churches and a fervent interest in their prayers.

The Sabbath schools connected with these churches are perhaps receiving an unusual degree of attention, and showing as a consequence a large increase of scholars and great prosperity. Many of the converts of the past year have been from among this class; a fresh manifestation of God's covenant love with his children, and Jesus' love for the young. The attention of some of the churches has been directed especially to the formation and vigorous prosecution of mis-

sion schools, in districts a little remote from the cities and large villages, the fruits of which are already beginning to appear in the conversion of souls as well as the general improvement of the hitherto neglected and abandoned.

The reports of the churches continue to express their deepest sympathy with our Government,—its President, the army and the navy, in their continued efforts to suppress this wicked rebellion, and for the perpetuation of constitutional liberty. And though great sacrifices have been made, both in treasure and life, the churches seem willing and determined to make more and greater, even to the amount that a righteous God shall demand for the conquering of peace upon the principles of freedom and equity, truth and love.

The general results of the efforts of the churches, with God's blessing upon them, may more especially be seen by the following particular statements.

The Barnstable Conference report some conversions in Yarmouth and West Barnstable, and in the four churches embraced in the towns of Wellfleet and Truro, a work of grace resulting in the hopeful conversion of from one hundred and fifty to two hundred souls.

In the Berkshire South Conference, the churches in Lenox, Lee, North and West Stockbridge, are reported as having enjoyed seasons of special refreshing. About twenty-five have been added to the church in Stockbridge, most of whom are members of the Sabbath school.

There have been a few conversions in two or three churches in the Brookfield Conference.

The Hampshire East Conference report several conversions at South Hadley Falls, twenty-five in Belchertown, and over forty in Mt. Holyoke Seminary.

Two or three of the churches in the Middlesex Union Conference have enjoyed a good degree of the presence of the Holy Spirit, and have received valuable accessions to their numbers.

There has been, in a few of the churches in the Norfolk Conference, within the year, rather more than usual religious interest. The churches in North Abington and Quincy have enjoyed special revivings, resulting in considerable additions to their membership. A movement is being made for the organization of a church in a congregation recently gathered in a destitute village on the borders of the Conference. Much has been done by many of the congregations connected with this, and with the other Conferences, for the comfort and welfare of our sick and wounded soldiers. In this patriotic work the ladies have usually taken the lead, and by their zeal and abundant labors in this direction, they have given full proof of their loyalty.

The Suffolk South Conference report an increased religious interest during the year, in nearly all their churches, resulting in the ingathering of a considerable number of new members to the church of Christ. The Shawmut church, of Boston, are erecting a larger church edifice, to meet the demands of an increasing congregation.

The Fall River and two of the Taunton churches, within the bounds of the Taunton and Vicinity Conference, have been greatly refreshed, and large numbers hopefully converted. The remarkable work in the former place, during the winter and spring, has been made widely known through the public prints.

There has been more than ordinary interest in several of the churches of the Worcester Central Conference. In Rutland, some forty or more have expressed hope in Christ. Several conversions have occurred in the congregations connected with the Union church in Worcester, and the churches in Shrewsbury and Boylston.

The Worcester South Conference report refreshings and many hopeful conversions in Sutton and Rockdale, and additions to other churches at every communion; also a gratifying degree of outward prosperity in their churches generally.

Thus our churches are being led, by that invisible Hand that conducted Abraham to the place of sacrifice and the ancient church through the wilderness, to our glorious destiny. Surely He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. We may well take courage, then, and with that noble champion in the cause of our common Redeemer, set aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and press toward the mark for the prize of our high calling.

Although the roar of the civil conflict in our land is loud, and the din of moral and spiritual strife is heard, and the contest fearful, still we have but to listen to the voice of the Captain of our salvation, and thus go on from conquering to conquer. For we are marching through Immanuel's ground, to fairer worlds on high. Let the hosts of God's elect, then, take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and put on the whole armor of God, even the Lord Jesus Christ, and do valiantly for the salvation of this world, and the glory of God; and having done all things, stand — stand for the truth as it is in Jesus.

J. C. Thacher.
J. P. Terry.

REPORT ON HOME EVANGELIZATION.

MASSACHUSETTS is well provided with church edifices. The localities are very few where it would be desirable to organize another church, and build another house for public worship. The great mass of the population is within comfortable distance of the evangelical ministration of the word and ordinances. In some places, where the population is sparse, attendance on the public means of grace is inconvenient for the distance; but the proportion of such families to the whole is a very small fraction. Almost all the people of this State are within the sound of a church bell, that, if followed, would show them the way to vacant pews. In brief, we mean to say that almost all in the Commonwealth, who desire church sittings, can find them within a reasonable distance.

There is a very fair provision for the ministration of the word and ordinances to the churches of our order in the State. The most of these provide a ministry in their own way, while some are aided by the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society. It is thought, indeed, that this aid should be extended to more churches, and that some now aided should receive more assistance. They think that more of the money raised in the State for home mission purposes should be expended within its bounds in nursing some infant churches to manhood, in comforting some in their decline, and in preventing the decline of others. We think, however, that this suggestion should be restricted to churches at an inconvenient distance from others of our order. We are aware that a few are feeble from their proximity to those of the same faith. In such case, practical and economical business combinations, rather than Christian charities, should be their relief.

In a word, we would express our conviction that there is nearly as much preaching of our kind in the State, as the people are willing to hear. We have no doubt a few more would attend on public worship, if church edifices were built only two or three squares off, or in their own village. Very like some more would go to houses now at that distance, if the pews were cushioned; and a few others, if the minister were a younger or a smarter man. But your Committee doubt whether, on

the whole, a Christian ambulance and hospital system for able-bodied men and women, would be a means of grace in Massachusetts.

Yet in view of these two facts of a fair supply of churches and ministers, a large proportion of the people remain unconnected with any place of public worship. In 1854, a Committee like your present one, reported to the General Conference of Maine, that of their population, "only one-third are connected with any sanctuary where God is worshiped and the gospel preached;" and that "more than two-thirds of the population are unreached by the means of grace." [Minutes of Maine General Conference, 1860, p. 63; 1862, p. 63.]

In 1860, a Committee on Home Evangelization reported to the General Association of Connecticut, that in the three Counties of Litchfield, Hartford and Windham, twenty-six out of every one hundred families were non-attendants at any place of worship, whether evangelical or otherwise. The returns for the State were not complete; but from an examination of one hundred out of one hundred and seventy towns, they felt warranted in the conclusion that full one-fourth of all their families confessedly neglect public worship of any kind.

Certain statistics of limited extent, gathered within our own borders, taken in connection with those from Maine and Connecticut, warrant us in assuming that one-fourth the people of this State stand unconnected with any organization or place for public worship. So one-fourth of our citizens stand aloof from the principal agency of God in human hands, for the regeneration, sanctification and salvation of men.

Here is a mournful fact for our consideration. God is pleased, "by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." By him men are "chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." Of his own will he begets sons and daughters "with the word of truth." The means of grace usually accompanying the preaching of the word, are the means that God has ordinarily blessed to the regeneration of men. Yet about one-fourth of our population are unconnected with any public ministrations of the word, even those that we esteem erroneous. They do not attend on public religious ministrations of any kind. They voluntarily and habitually absent themselves from all places of public worship. Surely it is worth an effort to know the causes of this.

The causes may be reduced substantially, we think, to three.

1. *The cost and style of public worship.* The cost bears ordinarily about in proportion to one's ability and social standing. Our church sittings are so graded in their valuation and taxes, and public opinion so locates men in the house of God, and so assesses men where expenses

are met by subscription, that the rich and the poor may, if they please, pay in about their proportion for the support of public worship. This payment is high. There are various ways of explaining the fact, denying it, defending it, and going round it. Still it remains a fact, that to worship God publicly in Massachusetts is expensive. This statement pertains to the poor washer-woman, who pays her four dollars per annum for her family pew; to the man of wealth, who pays his two hundred; and to the various grades between. With many, their pew tax is more than all their civil taxes. It costs them more to sustain their religion than their government. And the average cost is increasing; so that in cities and wealthy societies, the poor, almost from the necessities of the case, are lost to the congregation. Fashionable churches, and high rates for attendance, are, in some localities, making public worship a kind of monopoly.

Nor is it the cost of the sitting alone that excludes the day laborer, and the children of Patrick and Bridget. The distinctions of wealth and taste, and of family and custom, are carried from the outside life of the six days, into the house of God on the seventh. The wealthy and artistic surroundings, and the fashionable display in many a church edifice, are a moral veto against the entrance of the poor, the illiterate and the unrefined. The church finishings and furniture, and the dress of the audience, do not constitute an invitation to Lazarus to go in. Barefooted Tommy puts on his best to go to the Ragged or Mission School, but he has not the moral courage to follow his teacher into that splendid church on the avenue. He runs home to the alley, the cellar or the attic, while silks and diamonds go rustling and glittering in, to worship God in the great congregation.

The assignment of certain free seats for the poor does not remove the difficulty. It rather fixes and enhances it, setting it out conspicuous and in italics. It is more than the carnal heart is willing to do, to receive heaven's gift of a Saviour. The offense of the cross is, largely, its freeness. When we make the preaching of the word a gift to the poor, and then parade the gift by a conspicuous separation in the house of God, we make the cross doubly offensive. We forget that it requires more grace among men to receive a spiritual charity than to bestow it. A choice of location, under a nominal assessment and collection of tax, should leave the poorest widow to feel that she has a right, purchased and paid for, in that common house where "the rich and the poor [should] meet together." A pecuniary charge thus made in Christian policy, under the design to collect, not money but souls, would bring in many whom a systematic and proclaimed charity would keep out. The policy of Dr. Chalmers is worthy of study. When he left a noble church edifice and congregation to lay new

foundations in a neglected part of the same city of Glasgow, he so arranged it that the wealthy and learned, attracted by his professional powers, should not gain possession of the house and give character to the audience. He kept it open for the poor and made it popular with them.

2. *The neglect of the church to bring men within the reach of the means of grace.* The church shows too much selfish ease in her membership, as if their personal salvation were the chief end of spiritual activity. Many a worldly man does not get so much offered aid in spiritual, as he does in temporal affairs. Often the stranger neighbor is left long neglected in the social and religious courtesies due him. The habitual absentees from public worship are not sought out and invited to the sanctuary, and the stray children are not drawn to the Sabbath school. The proprieties, amenities and humanities of social life have not been used by our church with half their power, to bring men under the influences of the gospel. The people of God could learn a good lesson of politicians, in this matter of gaining the good will of men and then leading them. The churches could learn of each other what reserved power they have, if they would notice how a new, growing, or somewhat rival church can fill up its pews and treasury. Christians have often a blunt carelessness, an indifference to men's preferences and prejudices, that thwarts their labor and good intentions. "He that winneth souls is wise," but these lack that wisdom. They would soon and sadly fail in their worldly business, if they were no more studious and thoughtful of men and means.

And we must add, that we think the church fails to feel her obligation to Christ to bring men under the preaching and influence of his gospel. A proper sense of fidelity to Christ would, we think, very sensibly reduce the number of non-attendants on church service. Many think this work optional, whereas it is imperative. A church has no right to leave one-fourth of the population within its area to their choice in neglecting the great salvation. They may not be left unsought, uninvited and unwarned, in this habitual neglect of the public means of grace. Christianity gives something of a divine authority to use social and moral compulsion on these men, in the highways and hedges of their neglect, and it imposes something of a divine obligation on the followers of Christ, to exercise this moral search and persuasion and force.

3. *But the main cause of this neglect of public worship may be more briefly stated. It is the total and universal depravity of man.* The carnal mind is enmity against God, and his Son, and the cross, and the glorious gospel. Men do not naturally delight in the appropriate services of God's house. They have a positive aversion to holy things

in holy places. The great difficulty, calling for Home Evangelization, lies here in a depraved heart. Here is the vast and main cause of this evil of non-attendance. Here is the spring of the bitter waters, causing so much barrenness and death. All other causes are minor, and the most of them the offspring of this.

Our struggle, therefore, in this work, must be as long continued as the depraved nature of man. It is no difficulty that may be surveyed, encountered and suppressed, by a few years of special exertion, as the rebellion. No brief ecclesiastical stir in collecting and using the sad facts, will finish the work. We shall never finish it, because in its very nature, it can not be finished. No carefully drawn plans, accumulation of pecuniary and spiritual forces, and combined, energetic and comprehensive labor for a limited time, will do this work. The evil is not an emergency to be met by a specialty. It is the normal, ordinary state of a sinful race. It is a condition of things that will continue as long as our population is made up of the children of Adam.

When, therefore, we inquire for the means of its removal, it is a question that surveys causes more than cases. The means must be of a kind and of an adaptation and continuance that will have regard to the sources of the evil.

We think we may safely assume that the gospel has not yet been used to its maximum of power in bringing men under its influence and into a state of salvation. Certainly more can be done. The number of those who habitually neglect the house of God, and the proportion of unregenerate and lost men in our Christian neighborhoods, can be reduced. The gospel can be made to do more. The church has not yet exhausted the working and saving resources of Christianity.

What means shall we adopt to meet the evil? Evidently we must go to work with something of system, and with some idea of continuance. We must settle into this work of Home Evangelization as an ordinary, every-day and perpetual work of the church.

1. *Minute, extensive and analytic statistical investigations will not very much help us.* We already know the great fact that about one-fourth of our population habitually neglect the house of God, while their children are growing up with little or no safe religious instruction.

The moral statistics for localities, with a classification of them, and certain thrilling incidents interwoven, will aid to intensify the great fact. Yet the service will not be very much. Arithmetical, as rhetorical figures, do not greatly help moral work. Columns of figures are not as forcible, often, as they are expensive. Yet if needed, every

town, parish, or neighborhood furnishes them. The great fact of so much habitual absence from the house of God, is a fact of common fame in the Commonwealth. There is no need of a moral census to discover it. Every pastor and intelligent layman has it as an obvious and well-known fact, in his own neighborhood or territorial parish. And the knowledge of the wants of his own vicinity, where he is to work, will not be profitably increased by knowing that other neighborhoods, where he cannot work, have the same moral wants.

Moreover, we submit it as a strong point on this entire topic of gathering moral statistics, that the utility lies not so much in having the facts in possession and print, as in collecting them. To be put in possession of them by foreign canvassers, will benefit a church but little; but for that church to go out and gather them, while gathering men to the gospel feast and children to the Sabbath school, will prove to it a great stimulus and quickening. In such case, the good obtained will arise from the doing of the work, and not so much from the classified facts after they are obtained. The utility of these facts lies in the getting, and not in the having. The gathering of them by any church for its own vicinity, stands connected with the habit of religious labor for others; for the gathering is an incidental result of that labor. In drawing in those who can be drawn in under the means of grace in God's house, they are counted, together with those who care not to be so drawn. So the facts in detail are a kind of residuum, something left. Once in full possession, they lose the most of their worth. The producing and tabling of them have not the power of novelty, even. In the rural districts, particularly, little information would be imparted to any given community, by showing to them the moral census tables of which we speak. They know the facts for substance already. The exact figures, fractions and per cents, those evanescent and ephemeral facts, changed and gone as soon as caught, would constitute the most of the new information to any given pastor or church.

We do not, therefore, see much advantage to the cause of Home Evangelization, by throwing over the State a net-work of means to gather in these moral figures. An agency for this purpose we would not encourage. The expense would be quite an objection, while the facts themselves, gathered by strangers, and with little personal advantage to the local church incident to the gathering of them, would yield but poor service. When obtained, however, as incidental to an evangelizing process of labor instituted by any church, we would recommend their preservation in some systematic and permanent form.

2. *We would not recommend any new State organization to do this work.* If we consider the design of church organizations, and the scope of labor for each, and also the Benevolent Societies, as the Home Missionary, Bible, Sabbath School, and Tract Societies, we regard the field as fully covered, so far as organized State agencies for religious work can cover it. If these, and specially the one that is more than all, the church, do their legitimate work, we see no room for another. While we would not say anything to reflect on the present number of incorporated Christian agencies, we feel that we express but a common opinion, in saying that the Christian community does not see or feel the need of another. The existing agencies already touch each other, if they do not overlap, in their fields. A special organization for this work, with its expenses for an office, an agency and publications, your Committee think is not needed. We should advise to energize the church and ministry as inactive, rather than supplement them as deficient in their constitution.

3. *Your Committee would not recommend the introduction of special and compensated labor for this work.* It is a serious question whether the church has not already weakened herself and neglected her divinely appointed leadership, by assigning her legitimate work to subordinate agencies and doing it by proxy. The payment of money has become already too much a substitute for the doing of every-day Christian duty. No amount of contributions should free the Christian from personal service for Christ around his own door. It was doubtful progress for Zion, when the colporter took the place of the church-member in the distribution of religious truth through a Christian neighborhood. It was a doubtful relief from parental labor and obligation, when the Sabbath school was allowed to become a substitute, to so large an extent, for religious family instruction. And in this much needed work of Home Evangelization, we would not advise to any process that shall make it a paid labor, performed by a few spiritual employés. We do not think that personal Christian duty can be or ought to be thus commuted for money. The church cannot afford to hire such work done. She is in too deep need of the spiritual profits of doing it herself.

If there is any exception to this remark, it must be in cities and larger towns, where a dense population demands spiritual labor in excess of the ability of the local churches to render it personally by their membership. Such localities, however, are supposed to be covered by city missions.

There are some places, perhaps, in the cities, and a few in the country, wide aloof from the church centres surrounding them, that

need foreign aid. There may be in them some evangelical element that only needs concentrating and organizing, under a helping and responsible hand, to form the foundations of a useful and independent church. Such localities we esteem proper fields for Home Missionary operations. If the charter or by-laws of our State Society restrict it from labor or expense where there is no organized church, we see not why the charter or regulations should not be so changed as to meet the wants of such cases. Our collection in Massachusetts for Home Missions the last year, was $37,000 more than what we expended within the State. We see no reason why the workings of the Society should not be so modified as to use more of our funds on fields within our borders, when there are such inviting to cultivation.

But the main question remains: How shall this one-fourth of our population, now neglecting public worship, be brought to churches already built, and hear a gospel already preached, or be brought under the influence of that gospel without being brought to church?

To this question your Committee make first the general reply, that the individual churches in Massachusetts are to do this work separately, and each in its own vicinity. The remark of Dr. Chalmers is pertinent here, and expressive of our own views:

"Never, till God puts it into the hearts of men to go forth among our heathen at home, with the same zeal and enthusiasm which are expected of missionaries who go abroad, shall there be any thing like a revival of religion throughout the mass of our families, or a reclaiming from those bad habits of alienation from God and from goodness, into which the vast majority of them have fallen."

In addition to the general suggestions already made, your Committee would propose the three following Resolutions:

1. *Resolved*, That this General Conference recommend to each church connected with it, to systematize and prosecute vigorously the work of Home Missions within its border.

2. *Resolved*, That this Conference recommend to each District Conference to secure from every church connected with it an annual report on Home Evangelization, and assign a prominent place once a year in its meetings to this subject, and prepare a written report on the same within its bounds for the General Conference.

3. *Resolved*, That this State Conference appoint annually a Committee on Home Evangelization, whose duty it shall be to receive the reports from the District Conferences, and together with a digest of them, make a Report at the next annual meeting of this General Conference, which Report should be made to form a prominent department of interest in the annual deliberations of this body.

In performing their labor, the Committee recommend that each church, either alone or in concert with the neighboring churches, fix the borders of its legitimate field, or the sections to be under its own supervision; and then, by such process of personal labor in the church as to them may seem best, they set themselves to bring to the house of God those who willingly and habitually neglect it, and the children into the Sabbath school.

These individuals and families should be personally visited and invited to attend public worship, and the claims of the gospel should be pressed upon them, so far as Christian fidelity and policy may suggest. These families and persons should be made the subjects of earnest prayer and of varied and persistent labor, and such labor should be performed as under the command of God and the constraint of Christ's love. And in all this labor we think that a liberal use should be made of religious publications.

So would we bring this great work home where it belongs to the individual churches, and to the individual members of each church. We would mark it as one of the personal duties of church membership.

All this will require the deepest and purest of piety, even primitive piety. We have no expectation that this work will be successfully done, till the church enter more fully into sympathy with Christ in preaching the gospel to every creature. The maximum of power in the gospel to save a community can not be brought out and applied till the church in that community has attained to the maximum of piety.

If there be waste territory and uninclosed by any parish lines, lying between widely separated churches, we think those churches around it should unite in their plans and make a joint occupation of such territory by mission schools, prayer meetings, etc., mutually sustained. When in the judgment of these surrounding churches the circumstances will warrant it, we think the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society should be invited by them to take the field under its charge.

We are permitted to say that the Home Missionary Society stand ready to occupy such fields when pointed out.

All which is respectfully and unanimously submitted by the Committee.

W. Barrows.
John Pike.
D. L. Furber.
Elijah D. Goodrich.
Lorenzo Eldred.

ESSAY.

BY REV. EBENEZER CUTLER, WORCESTER.

THE SPIRIT OF THE GOSPEL ILLUSTRATED IN ITS TENDENCY TO SELF-PROPAGATION.

THE spirit of the gospel is not the spirit of the world, but is opposed to it. There is a radical and irreconcilable difference between them. They differ in their sources, their tendencies, their laws of development, and their results. They are so opposed as to be mutually exclusive. The difference between the spirit of the world and the spirit of the gospel, is the difference between absolute selfishness and Christian love.

The gospel is distinct from all the wisdom of human philosophy, and immeasurably transcends it. Though in the world and for the world, it is not of the world. It is not the product of human thinking, but a revelation from the Divine Mind, for the enlightenment, guidance and salvation of men. Only once has the spirit of it been exemplified in its fullness and perfection. Jesus of Nazareth was the incarnation of it. He not only taught it, but exhibited it to the world in its living form, its vitalizing power, its perfect development, and its blessed fruitfulness. He was the way, the truth, and the life. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. Though we were his enemies, he loved us; though we crucified him, he gave himself for us; though we mocked and blasphemed him on the cross, he interceded with God for our pardon and salvation. He came to seek and to save that which was lost,—even at the inevitable sacrifice of himself. When he made his soul an offering for sin, he fulfilled the condition upon which, through the germination and development and endless reproductiveness of the spirit of the gospel, he should henceforth see his seed—the travail of his soul—and be satisfied. The efficacy of that act was retrospective as well as prospective. By that act he became the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,—whether previously in the promise of the fulfillment, or subsequently in the fulfillment of the promise. So that when the fruit of his sufferings shall

have all been gathered, there shall be a great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, who shall ascribe their salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

The spirit of the gospel, then, has a tendency to self-propagation. The Author of the gospel infused his own spirit and life not only into the words which he spake, but also into the words which he inspired his Prophets and Apostles to speak. Hence the gospel is the word of spiritual and holy life. As it lies upon the pages of the Sacred Volume, as it is read by undiscerning and unsusceptible minds, as it is heard by worldly and unbelieving souls, its life may be latent and potential, like that of the unplanted seed; nevertheless it has life, and therefore a tendency to propagate itself. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord. Fire has a tendency to burn. Our Saviour compared the spirit of the gospel to living water. The natural tendency of a fountain, though unsealed, is to gush. Though the potential latency of the gospel may never be wakened into manifestation in the heart which receives it only as the hard-trodden path receives the seed of the sower, yet in every heart which has a spiritual receptivity for the truth, it will always waken and expand and unfold into blade and blossom, and into fruit yielding seed after its kind.

See how this tendency of the spirit of the gospel to self-propagation is illustrated in the individual who receives the truth with a susceptible heart, as the good soil receives seed. When the Baptist pointed two of *his* disciples to Jesus, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God," it seems that they immediately became the disciples of Jesus. The ingrafted word began at once to manifest not only its power in their souls, but its tendency to diffuse itself. One of them, Andrew, first found his own brother Simon, and said unto him, "We have found the Messias;" and Simon at once became a disciple of Jesus. The next day Philip, led to Jesus probably by Andrew and Peter, was renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him, and became at once instrumental of the conversion of Nathanael. The word of Christ, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life," began to be verified at once in the receptive soul of the woman of Samaria; for she left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and said to the men, "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did." The leper whom Jesus cleansed went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, persuading people to come to Jesus from every quarter. So the Gadarene, dispossessed of the demon, departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things

Jesus had done for him. How was it with Paul? The spirit of the gospel was in him, as in Jeremiah, a fire shut up in his bones, forcing him to act according to his declaration, "Necessity is laid upon me; yea, wo is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" But these do not differ in kind, however much they may differ in degree, from all who have once been imbued with the spirit of the gospel. The zeal of the new convert is proverbial. The spirit of the gospel, according to the degree in which it is possessed, struggles in every Christian to increase, impart, diffuse and propagate itself. Its tendency to self-propagation can no more be repressed in the heart of a true believer, than the tendency of the life of the seed to unfold itself into manifestation can be repressed in appropriate soil. For the spirit of the gospel is the spirit of Christ in the believing soul—living, life-giving, the power of an endless life.

Here it is needful to guard against a misapprehension. It should never be forgotten that the progress of Christianity is not altogether by the *development* of its spirit. The tendency of the gospel to self-propagation does not imply that the believing parent can impart it to his children as a birthright, or that a preacher can impart it to his hearers, or that any human agency can renew a sinner unto holiness. The development of Christianity is not from any universal germ in the human heart, not from the holiness of an individual leavening the mass, not from the inherent power of the word of truth. In every individual the development of Christianity must begin at a certain point of his life and experience. Up to that point the gospel takes no root, puts forth no germ, and finds not the conditions essential to the development of its spirit in his heart. That stage of incipient development is at his regeneration by the Spirit of God. Every Christian became a Christian not by development, but by a re-creation in righteousness and true holiness. When the exotic principle of holiness has once been implanted or begotten in the heart by the Holy Spirit, the process of the development of the spirit of the gospel in that heart begins. Thence it is onward and upward, according to its predetermining law; purifying the soul of its pollution, delivering it more and more from the power of sin and temptation, assimilating all that is immortal in the man into the growing holiness of his character, and attaining nearer and nearer unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. For all that are born of God by the power of his Spirit with the word of truth, are predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son. The likeness is to be not merely general, but every moral feature of the only begotten Son is to be developed and reproduced in the child of adoption. By the predetermining law of holiness, which is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, in every renewed soul the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy,

peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Within the individual soul the development of Christianity is not diffusion and multiplication, but growing enlargement, maturity and symmetry.

Along with this development of the spirit of the gospel in the soul, there is also a development of it by the soul. For this tree of life, besides being exotic, is omniferous—bearing all kinds of moral and spiritual virtues and graces at the same time; and also perennial—always budding and blossoming, always bearing, always maturing and always shedding its fruit whenever there is opportunity for self-propagation. For though no Christian can impart his own holiness to a sinner, he can and does and ought to furnish some of the conditions essential to bring a sinner under the influence and power of the Holy Spirit. It is in this that the tendency of the spirit of the gospel to self-propagation is specially seen. Christians are the salt of the earth; by the sweet and healthy savor of their instructions, admonitions, virtues and graces, dissuading men from crime and vice, and persuading them to repentance and the acceptance of Christ. Enlightened by the Sun of righteousness, they shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life. Having been renewed into Christ's image, they are the living epistles of Christ, known and read of all men. Filled with the spirit of the gospel, they exemplify and diffuse it; breaking up the fallow ground of unbelieving hearts, and sowing the precious seed of the kingdom, and thus preparing the way for the Holy Spirit to make that seed productive of a holy, spiritual harvest. This development of the spirit of the gospel is from within them that possess it, outward to them that possess it not. But we have this treasure in earthern vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We may plant, and we may water, but only God giveth the increase.

What, now, is the law by which this tendency of the spirit of the gospel to self-propagation is developed and exhibited? The question refers us to the very essence of Christianity in the converted soul. He who has been created anew in Christ Jesus, begins at once to love God as the chief object of his affections, and to love his neighbor as himself. He now lives because Christ lives in him. He has become partaker of Christ's spirit, which is a spirit of love; and having, as the fruit of Christ's love to him, found peace in believing, and joy in the Holy Ghost, the power of selfishness is broken, and he desires to make others partakers of his peace and of his joy, and to behold Christ in them the hope of glory. The benevolence of Christ has taken possession of his heart, and he is no longer selfish in his joys, or hopes, or spiritual treasures. Instead of confining spiritual blessings to himself, he delights to impart them to others, to diffuse them

in the world. For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. The law of Christian love—love to Christ and love to man for Christ's sake—is the motive force by which the spirit of the gospel tends to propagate itself. That spirit cannot be confined within any definite limits. The man possessed of it cannot look abroad over a world lying in wickedness, and feel satisfied to do nothing to save as many as possible from perdition. For as God so loved the world as to send his Son to redeem it, and as Christ so loved it as to give his life for it, so the Christian, in proportion to his love to Christ, loves the world for Christ's sake, and *his* love also cannot but be manifested. There is such an expansion of the spirit of the gospel in him, such a yearning for the spiritual welfare of his fellow-men, that he longs to bring them to Christ, and to embrace them in the arms of Christian fellowship. The love of Christ constrains him. This is the internal secret of the self-propagation of the spirit of the gospel.

The external correlative of that internal force is sacrifice. Self-sacrifice was the form in which the love of Christ to men was manifested and made available. Had his love not expressed itself in his atoning self-sacrifice, it would have been in vain. He said himself, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Even He, without whom was not anything made that was made, could not bring a single son to glory except by the sacrifice of himself. The servant is not greater than his Lord. It is the law of love to look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. The spirit of the gospel propagates itself by the self-surrender of its subjects, for the sake of bringing others to become its subjects. When the Lord Jesus announced to Ananias that Saul of Tarsus was a chosen vessel unto him, to bear his name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel, he added, "For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." Did not Paul appeal to his self-denials and labors and sufferings for the sake of the salvation of men, as the very vouchers of his apostleship? His successors in the ministry have, as a general thing, sought to propagate the spirit of the gospel at the hazard and expense of worldly honors and worldly gains. They have counted their lives not dear to them, so they might finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they have received of the Lord Jesus. Their labors have not been in vain. Those who cannot preach in person, have to labor according to the same law of self-denial and sacrifice, in order to preach by proxy, and thus win souls to Christ. The widow's

mite was a fruitful seed. It is the spirit of the gospel not to hoard, but to give; and to give till the giving is felt to be an imparting of one's self. What is so surrendered for Christ's sake, whether it be time, talent, labor, substance, or suffering, is sure to spring forth, like the life of the dissolving seed, in manifold increase. For He who promised his disciples that he would be with them alway, even to the end of the world, whenever and wherever, to whatever extent and by whatever means they should endeavor to disciple all nations, has been faithful, and will be faithful, to fulfill his promise. His own appointed instrumentalities he has honored and will continue to honor. His gospel is not preached in vain. No disciple of Jesus labors in his name for naught. No sacrifice for Christ's sake is like water spilled upon the ground which cannot be gathered up. Whatever is done or suffered, be it much or little, for the sake of propagating the spirit of the gospel, is made by the Holy Spirit the power of God unto salvation, to some extent. The poor disciple's paltry contribution into the treasury of the Lord here and to-day, may yield its thirty, sixty, or an hundred-fold increase of spiritual blessings in some Western State, in China, in India, in Africa, or in the lonely isle. We may not see the fruit of the tiny seed which we give to the wind, to be wafted on wings of down to the soil prepared by the hand of Providence; but he who guides it to its destination, will secure the operation of its internal law of germination, growth, maturity, and constant reproduction. For from the time that our Saviour commissioned his Apostles to preach repentance and remission of sins in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, the spirit of the gospel has been endued with power from on high. Its tendency to self-propagation has been in the constant process of development; its gathered fruit has been from many generations and from many climes; its growing fruit is already seen over vast portions of the globe; and this process will continue till the products shall wave to all the winds of heaven, and the whole world be white with its maturity for the harvest.

The spirit of the gospel is thus a progressive spirit. On the side of instrumentalities, its progress is by the development of the piety of Christ's disciples in toils and sacrifices of Christian love for the conversion and salvation of those who are perishing for lack of knowledge. On the side of efficient power, this progress is by a new creation in the heart of every individual brought into the spiritual kingdom. The harmony of the instrumentalities and the efficient power, is such as to make the spirit of the gospel aggressive and triumphant in its development, so that Christ shall not fail to see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. Like the Eastern banian, the spirit of the gospel, first matured and planted as a single seed eighteen hundred

and thirty years ago in the mount of Calvary, has sprung up, put forth its branches on all sides, replanted its extended tips, taken new root, sprung up again, and repeated the process of self-propagation, till already field upon field and nation after nation have been, and ultimately the whole world shall be embraced within the circle of its meeting and intermingling extremes, and all the inhabitants thereof shall dwell beneath its arbors, and inhale the fragrance of its healing leaves.

ESSAY.

BY REV. ABIJAH P. MARVIN, OF WINCHENDON.

THE CHRISTIAN ELEMENT ESSENTIAL TO THE TRUEST PATRIOTISM; OR, THE PRESERVATION OF OUR FREE INSTITUTIONS IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT THE GOSPEL.

PATRIOTISM is love of country; and the truest patriotism inspires us to perform, in behalf of our country, the most service in the wisest way. This definition lifts the true patriot above the control of selfish views, and shows that he loves his country, not merely because it is his; or because his ancestors once lived in it; or because he inherits a portion of its renown; or because he is angry with its enemies; or because his interests and the interests of his children are bound up with its prosperity. The truest patriotism is shown at one time, in defending the government and preserving the institutions of the country, as they are; and at another time, in seeking to reform the country, to remodel the government, and to perfect all the agencies by which the general welfare may be secured.

In countries where the government stands in the way of the highest intelligence, virtue and happiness of the people, patriotism would not sacrifice the country to the government; the people to the hereditary holders of office and power; the life of the state to its written constitution; its future and permanent prosperity and glory to its present peace and order. Now it would maintain the existing order of things; and again it would work a revolution. Whether the revolution shall be peaceful, or shall be attended with violence and bloodshed, will depend upon circumstances. The truest patriotism will always aim to produce needed changes with the least expenditure of means, and the smallest possible display of passion and violence, compatible with the end in view. If the minds of men can be so enlightened, and their hearts so disposed, that they will accept and establish great and beneficent reforms, gradually though not tardily, the true lover of his country is not only satisfied, but delighted; but if such needed changes are resisted by ignorance, or selfishness, or stubborn will, then the wise patriot

will watch for the moment when the indispensable blow must be struck, and he will strike so hard that no second blow will be needed. But in free countries, where the government is founded on the principles of righteousness, and fosters, so far as a government wisely can, all that conduces to the general welfare, patriotism would oppose revolution. It would maintain the existing constitution, and support the government in the exercise of its legitimate authority, and thus secure to all classes of the people, the highest blessings which human government can bestow. While therefore the truest patriotism would overturn a wicked government, and subvert a bad constitution, for the sake of improving the country; it would stand fast by the country and its government, when the latter was so administered as to promote the general good.

This statement shows why the Christian element is essential to the truest patriotism. It is because the highest good of no country can be secured without the prevalence of the gospel of Christ, inasmuch as the Christian system alone contains those moral and spiritual forces which can develop all the energies of human nature, and at the same time, give a right direction to their activity. In all nations, mankind have some idea of God; and their character, to a degree, corresponds to this idea of the divinity. If their deity is cruel, tyrannical, or lustful, they will be base and degraded. If they have a knowledge of the true God, their standard of morality will be elevated, and their character will be improved. A comparison of all known systems of religion, will show that the Christian system only presents to us a God who is perfect. All the gods of the heathen—in lands classical and barbarous alike—are deficient in power, and wisdom, and virtue. There is not one among all the divinities of the world's mythologies, whom a child trained under the influence of the Bible, could worship, and yet retain his own self-respect. The influence of a belief in such gods must always be degrading. The "god of the silver bow" and the "bright-eyed Minerva" might have some influence in promoting education and the fine arts, but they could exert no moral power over the worshipers of Venus and Bacchus, to restrain them from lust and intemperance.

On the other hand, the God of the Bible is infinite in every natural, moral and spiritual attribute. In him there is nothing wanting which is essential to a perfect being. And he is always before our souls as an object of study, of admiration, and of adoring love. Wherever the true God is known, there is a perfect standard of character, a perfect code of moral laws, and a possibility of human improvement. There are also, in the sanctions of the divine law, and in the promises of the gospel, mighty inducements to turn men from a life of sin, to a life of moral rectitude. Besides, the Christian system is singular in this,

that it alone, of all the religions or philosophies of the world, makes it imperative on us to love our neighbors as ourselves. It may well be doubted if the idea ever found expression before it was uttered by our Saviour. Certainly no authentic utterance of this momentous truth has ever come to our knowledge, though something apparently akin to it has been ascribed to a Chinese sage. But however this may be, the Christian religion stands apart from all other systems, in making benevolence the law of action between man and man. And this law is so perfect, that obedience to it would make society everywhere perfectly happy. Let this rule become the law in the hearts of men, and we should have good government, a faithful administration of the laws of the land, justice and fair dealing in private life, peace and happiness in families, benevolence to the poor, the weak, the ignorant, the insane, and all other sons and daughters of affliction, and freedom from all international quarrels and wars. And as these blessings would be multiplied, so would there be continual advancement in all the sciences, the arts, and the industries of life. There would be skilled labor, frugality, invention, and of course, a vast increase of wealth, taking every form that is adapted to the convenience, the health, the virtuous enjoyment, and the highest happiness of mankind.

What is thus abstractly stated, is proved to be true by the history of the world. If we glance at the history of the nations, we find that they have been virtuous, prosperous and happy, or otherwise, in proportion as they have come under the influence of the Bible, or on the other hand, have been unwilling to retain God in their knowledge. The heathen nations, so called, without exception, are, and always have been, inferior to those which have had a knowledge of the true God. In China, for example, there is intelligence and skill, wealth and refinement; yet the great mass of the people are miserably poor, and the character of the Chinese is universally debased. In India, in Persia, in all Pagan nations, the government is tyrannical; the people are slaves, or serfs, or subjects of a despot. The Arabs and the American Indians may have the freedom of the desert and the wilderness, of the river and the lake, but they are under the absolute domination of their chiefs. The ancient republics were no exception to this universal fact. The few possessed the wealth, intelligence and power; the many were poor, ignorant, powerless; all were depraved. Rome and Athens were crowded with slaves, whose persons, families and lives were at the mercy of irresponsible masters.

Passing from Pagan to Christian countries, we notice a striking change. The first fact that impresses us is this, that nearly all power has become centralized in Christendom. The 800,000,000, or 1,000,000,000 of pagans in the world, could not stand a single cam-

paign against the banded might of the Christian world. It was suggested, a few years since, by an able writer in the Westminster Review, that the four great powers, Russia, France, Great Britain and the United States, should form an alliance, portion out the rest of the world into four divisions, and then govern them in the interest of humanity. The measure is entirely practicable if these nations were in entire accord. Much more, if all Christian nations were united in one league, would it be easy for them to hold the heathen nations in complete subjection. But this increase of power has its source in religion. Such a uniform result must have the same cause. A better knowledge of God has enlightened the minds and improved the hearts of men. The inevitable consequence is seen in the morality, the industry, the wealth, the intelligence, and the freedom of the Christian nations, as compared with those which are under the depressing influence of a false notion of the deity.

But a comparison of Christian nations with each other, is quite as interesting and instructive. It will be found that those nations which have the most correct idea of God, and are most completely under the influence of the Christian system, are the most intelligent, virtuous and free. All travelers agree in asserting the superiority of the Protestant cantons of Switzerland over those where the inhabitants are chiefly of the Roman Catholic faith. There is as high a degree of morality in France, as in Spain or Portugal, and a greater measure of freedom. The cause is to be found in the fact that the Reformation made some progress in France, and that the Huguenots and their descendants have always exerted considerable influence in leavening society. Holland, Prussia, Hanover, Denmark and Sweden, have more freedom than the people of those countries which are under the influence of the Roman or the Greek church. Austria and Russia are now passing through a new stage of reform to a higher plane of civilization; and the beneficent movement traces its origin to the spread of Christian ideas. Among the Protestant nations, those are the most enlightened and free which are the most liberally supplied with the open Bible. All the facts point in one direction; and as we ascribe all the great changes on the earth, in the air, and in the seas, to the sunlight, so may we find the power that works all changes for the good of man's estate, in human society, in the Sun of righteousness. In other words, just in proportion as men or nations come under the power of the gospel of Christ, do they improve in mind and heart; in governments and society; in wealth and refinement; in security and freedom. The gospel has abolished serfdom in England and all Protestant and Papal states, with limited exceptions; and what was achieved in Protestant Prussia in a former century, is now taking place in the vast realms of Russia. At the same time, the Christian system, with its

legitimate offspring, free schools, free press, free ballot, free courts, and free pulpit, has entered into a deadly conflict with slavery, in these United States. Such is the wonderful influence of the Christian religion, or the gospel of Christ, on the advancement of the nations which receive it, in every thing which conduces to the highest degree of prosperity. The conclusion is inevitable, that the Christian element is essential to the truest patriotism.

But it is time to attend to the second clause of our general proposition, which is, that the gospel of Christ is essential to the preservation of our free institutions; or in other words, republican government, in the American sense, is impossible without the Bible. This is a matter of special interest to us, because the experiment of a democratic republican government is on trial here; and it will fail, as it has everywhere besides, unless we make use of the only power over the human mind which is adequate to unfold, educate and direct human nature to its highest issues. The point we have been considering—that is, the religion of the Bible must be the main element of the truest patriotism, because the nations improve in every particular, just in proportion as they come under its influence—is generally admitted by all thinkers and writers of eminence; but the point now before us, has received less attention, and perhaps has met with less general concurrence. Some attribute the growth of freedom—the increase of personal liberty—to many other causes, while my proposition asserts that the essential element, the primal force, the indispensable virtue of a *free* government, is to be found in the Christian system. By this you understand me to mean, that no nation can become or remain free, in the broadest and most radical sense of the term, unless the people are brought under the influence of Christian truth, and a large proportion of them are renewed in heart by the personal agency of the Spirit of God. The knowledge and love of divine truth are essential to the perfection and stability of free institutions. This has often been assumed by divines and statesmen, but I have never seen the subject analyzed, and viewed fundamentally, from the Christian stand-point. Perhaps this is owing to the evident force of the truth. It has been taken for granted by its advocates. But it cannot be an idle speculation for us to inquire why it is that our free institutions depend on the gospel of Christ for their stability.

It is a necessity of mankind to have a government over them. Right, cannot be secured without government, and there can be no development of wealth, of civilization, of varied industry, and of general education, unless the government is strong and wise. Religion would die out, or become corrupt, in a state of anarchy. This government may be of two kinds. It may be moral, or a government of

ideas; or it may be a government upheld by physical force. In the former case, men are under self-restraint. They will not steal, rob, defraud, slander, or murder their fellow-men, because they are governed by moral principle. In a community of such men, there would be little need of physical force; in society where the gospel had *complete* sway, nothing would be needed but a perfect knowledge of rights and duties, to secure the highest end of government. Armies and navies, prisons and penitentiaries, could be dispensed with, and the vast sums consumed in their support, could be used for the adornment of life. But when you come to a society composed of selfish individuals—as is the case with the majority in all nations—you will be pained with perpetual violations of law. All sorts of crime abound, and men have to be restrained by the strong arm of law—by physical force.

Statesmen have understood this in all ages of the world; and they have known also that bad men would not only break particular laws, but would subvert government itself whenever it crossed their wicked plans and passions, unless it could be placed on a strong foundation. Hence their various devices for giving stability to government. As mankind have been unwilling to yield to moral forces, and thus have made free government impossible, it has been necessary to make use of the selfish passions of the heart, in giving power to government. Let us take a rapid view of history, as it bears on this point, and learn how stability has been secured by the sacrifice of liberty.

The Chinese have existed for many centuries as a large, populous and wealthy nation. They have had, for ages, many of the arts of civilized life. Though perfect heathen, they have enjoyed a good degree of stability. Often afflicted in past centuries, as at the present time, with internal commotions, and at times conquered by foreigners, their institutions have survived nevertheless, and they are, at this day, the most populous nation in the world, and living substantially under the same laws which their fathers obeyed before the Christian era. To what must we ascribe the perpetuity of their laws, and their state of society? To this one thing more than all else, viz., that their religion consists in the worship of their ancestors. A people who render religious homage to their forefathers, will hold all the laws, customs, traditions, institutions and literature of those who went before them in the highest honor. The innovator will be esteemed a sacrilegious wretch, and society will remain firm and compact while ages pass away. Nothing but the influence of new ideas can dissolve the old fabric; under the power of which it will pass away as the descending glacier melts at the foot of the mountain. But if new ideas can be kept out, the system will remain forever, unless overthrown by

the arms of foreigners. Meantime, the stability of the government will be at the expense of liberty.

In Japan, we find a system of government which has been stable as far back as history guides us. They have an institution which serves as a defense against all change. By the arrangement for dividing power between two Emperors — the mikado and the tycoon — and of requiring their joint assent to all changes of importance, the power to make fundamental alterations, is almost if not entirely taken away. Add to this the local power of the great daimios, and we have the secret of the trouble which now agitates the ruling classes of Japan in relation to intercourse with the rest of the world. Probably no final solution of the question will be found, but in a violent and bloody revolution. New ideas will produce a fermentation which will burst the old bottles, and rend the old garments of their civilization, and make way for a new order of things. But this system, which has for ages given that country stability and order, has left the people in ignorance, poverty, moral debasement, and destitution of civil right and political power. It is curious to note, in this connection, that the late John C. Calhoun endeavored to introduce into our country something like the double government of the Japanese,—of two presidents with their veto power, which, with the local daimios or slaveholders, would have made *one* institution secure, and rendered all the power of the government, and all the interests of the people, subservient to its growth and splendor; while all improvement would be impossible. There would be stability, but the death of freedom.

In the vast realm of India, we find a permanent state of society. There have been revolutions and conquests repeatedly since the days of Alexander, but the institutions of the Hindoos have been unchangeable. How could this be, especially since social life has been so corrupt? The answer is, one institution has preserved all the rest; the institution of *caste*. By that system, the people are divided into strata or layers, and placed one above the other, in regular order. The man of high caste must remain, as to social position, where he was born. The man of low caste could not possibly rise. It is a violation of all order, right and duty, for him to aspire to rise above his condition by birth. People are placed, by this system, like articles in the drawer of a bureau. Each kind is shut up in its own compartments, with no possibility of mixing. To such a people there may be captivity and a change of dynasty, but there can be no change of society, unless by the entrance of new ideas; and these are fenced out with the utmost care. Yet as they enter, especially as the truths of the gospel gain admission, they set the whole mass in ferment. But excluding light, and leaving the people to their native corruption, they will remain subject to a stable and long-lived despotism.

Greece and Rome were called republics, but they were never governed by general public opinion. If they had been, those states would have enjoyed no stability. The ignorance was too dense, and the state of morals too low, to make it safe for the people universally to exercise political power. In fact, the rights of citizenship were very much restricted in both of those countries, and power was lodged in the hands of the minority, who were thus bound and pledged to keep things as they were. Therefore, the free states of Greece stood until overwhelmed by the Roman power; and Rome herself crumbled to pieces at last, in consequence partly of the influx of new and Christian ideas.

If we look into the old feudal system, we shall find elements of mighty force, taking advantage, as in the case of all the other systems above-mentioned, of the selfishness and corruption of the human heart. The whole system was bound together, as by bands of iron, from the foundation to the top-stone. All the lands of the country belonged to the sovereign, after the conquest, in England; the condition of which country we will take for an illustration of our subject. These he divided, after making reservations for royal demesnes, forests and parks, among his nobles, on condition of their rendering obedience, tribute and military service. These nobles made subdivisions among their followers on like conditions. Thus they were bound to their immediate superiors, and through them, to their sovereign. The common people were *adscripti glebæ*, or bound to the soil, and were transferable with the land. But they had this security, that they could not be sold off the estate, and were entitled to support while under their master. In addition to this, they were a sort of outlaws in all other places. Thus self-interest bound the whole into a compact mass, and made society stable. Nothing could overturn it but the inflowing of new ideas; and in fact, Christianity was the main though not the only force in breaking that tyrannical system into fragments.

The same is true, with a difference, with all systems of nobility and serfdom. They are based on human selfishness, and are adapted with wonderful wisdom to endure the vicissitudes of time. But they all have their day, and must come to an end, unless the devil is destined to be the god of this world.

Coming nearer home, the slave system of the South has in it certain elements of stability. It is a system of caste, and gives nearly all power to a few wealthy owners of land, and holders of slaves. It holds millions of black men in complete subjection, depriving them of intelligence and arms, and making them entirely powerless. It holds millions of poor white men in thrall, and makes them tributary to its domination. Whether it can resist the progress of ideas, and the shock of arms, remains to be seen.

This brief survey would be incomplete without a reference to the polity of the Hebrews, which will reward profound study, in all its parts. When God set up that people in the promised land, he gave them certain institutions which would have a tendency to make society stable, and at the same time secure liberty to the people. Indeed, the Jews alone, in ancient times, enjoyed the benefit of universal freedom. Their tutelary Deity did not proceed on the assumption that mankind are wise and good enough to govern themselves; or that they can be safely left to regulate all things by public opinion. In that age of the world, no nation was capable of self-government. In the system of the Hebrews, there were several arrangements which were wisely adapted to maintain national life. One of these related to property. No family could alienate its inheritance except for a brief term of years. This secured equality of condition, and made slavery impossible — in the case of native Hebrews — except by a gross violation of law. By naturalization — and the inducements for aliens to become naturalized were even stronger among them than in our country — foreign residents became entitled to all the rights of natives, both civil and religious. The year of jubilee made every man independent. The law against usury, or the taking of interest for the use of money, made it almost impossible for one class of men to become rich, while others remained poor. Then the tribes had their fixed bounds, which they could not extend at the expense of each other. Then the tribe of Levi had its support secured to it out of the other tribes, by a fundamental law; and they were made the teachers of the nation, in the laws, in music, in religion. Besides, the religion of the nation was so fixed, that the same great system of truth was taught by symbol, and daily sacrifice, and ceremony, however corrupt the prophets and priests might become. But I need not pursue the subject. The fact is, the nation was so bound together — bolted and double-bolted — that captivity could not break it up, nor division, nor change of dynasty. The curse of God finally fell upon it, and by the Romans it was scattered into all lands; but still the people are preserved from coalescing with any of the nations of the earth.

From this rapid survey, we learn how the tyrannical, despotic and corrupt systems of government have been fortified. Their framers, not trusting to human intelligence and virtue, bound men with chains and fetters; and God himself, in planting the freest and best earthly government of ancient times, placed guards against the fluctuations of opinion in the very frame-work of society. These systems — except the Jewish — could live and flourish without Christianity; but not one of them was compatible with the full development and happiness of mankind. They were made for the few at the expense of the many; they were all intended to secure stability without general free-

dom; and none of them can stand before the advancing power of the gospel. That is in deadly antagonism with them, and will beat them in pieces as fine as the dust of the summer-threshing floor, and will sweep them away as chaff before the whirlwind.

And now we are prepared to look at the free institutions of our country, which are in broad and radical contrast with those of most nations in ancient and modern times. The old systems secured stability at the expense of freedom. Does our system, which gives us freedom, have *in itself* the elements of stability? The answer will be instructive, for it will show us that there is not, in all our institutions, a single element of permanence strong enough to resist the shocks of opinion, and the waves of passion; and that our only security is the gospel of Christ.

Do you point me to our system of good laws, in the state and nation? I answer, that these can be changed or repealed, at any time, by a popular majority. They are not under the shield of religious veneration, or of caste, or of feudal title, or of class legislation. They depend on the popular breath, and a breath can mar them as a breath hath made.

Do you point me to the fundamental law, the written constitution of the state? But that can be altered, amended, or abolished, just as well as a law concerning petty larceny. The only difference is, it takes a little longer time, and a few more formalities, before the popular will can make itself felt. Under other systems of government, fundamental changes can be made only after long effort, and fearful agitations. In Great Britain, for example, where monarchy exists in its mildest, and aristocracy in its least exceptional form, the will of the people is held in by almost impassable barriers. The consent of the sovereign is necessary to every change, and where the proposed change is important, the throne could wield a mighty power in favor of the existing order of things. Then the innovators must overcome the opposition of the nobility, in and out of the house of lords. Coming to the house of commons, it is found to be half filled with sons, brothers, and other retainers of the nobility. In addition, a property qualification is required of all members; they must be wealthy enough to serve without pay; and often they must obtain their seats by the profuse expenditure of money. If to this we add that only one man in six or eight has the right of suffrage, we easily see how difficult it is for the popular will to make itself felt in that country. But we have changed all that, and have only to secure a popular majority in favor of an amendment to the constitution, when presidents or governors, senators and representatives,—chosen by the same

voters who have signified their desire for a change,—hasten to ratify the general will.

Do you point me to our excellent judiciary system by which our laws are interpreted? But the courts are the creatures of the constitution and the laws, and can be remodeled at any session of the legislative body. If the judges are not elective by the people, and not removable except for misconduct, yet vacancies are continually occurring, and can be filled by men of different views and principles. The power of the courts can be restricted by confining them to the administration of statute law, and even by limiting the meaning of legal terms.

Do you point me to our unequaled system of free schools, of every grade, as proof that we have a single element of stability, in itself considered? But what sustains the schools? Is it anything but public opinion? Are these schools endowed? Are their foundations imbedded among the roots of the body politic? Not at all. Could not all the laws in relation to public instruction be repealed, if the people so willed? An ignorant people will not tax themselves to maintain public schools. Besides, a corrupt public sentiment is competent to banish all sound religious knowledge, and make it obligatory on the teachers to inculcate infidelity, and sow the seeds of moral corruption in the susceptible souls of the rising generation.

Do you point me to our army and navy? To our militia system? To our military organization? But the people are the militia and the national volunteers. The people are called upon to decide whether there shall be any military force. Public opinion — the consent of the majority of all the men in the State — is requisite to the existence of the militia system. How can the great public be induced to vote taxes for the support of a military organization, unless there is enough of public virtue and intelligence to understand the need of authority, and to make sacrifices for the general good.

Do you point me to our religious institutions? But they are not bound up with the state, like those of India, of Greece, of Rome, of Spain, of Turkey, and of England. With them, vast pecuniary, social, and political interests are indissolubly connected with the religious establishment. Such an establishment always wields vast power in a nation. It has a *status*. The religion of the state must be taught by the priests, according to set form, whatever may be the faith, or the want of it, of the ministers of religion. Thus the church, or the religious establishment, in its connection with the state, is a conservative element of great force, and lends stability to the existing order of things. But we have no such union of church and state. Religion can help us in maintaining civil order, only as it

acts as a moral power on individual hearts. We return therefore from this survey, with the conviction that a really free state, like ours, has no institutions, or arrangements of state-craft, which can give stability to our form of government, or to our civilization. In short, no such institutions are compatible with real and universal liberty, and the general exercise of the political franchise. They are fetters on the many, while they give a monopoly of wealth, power, social position, office and influence, to a class, more or less select.

What then? Are we deprecating our own institutions and laws? Are we manifesting distrust in regard to the great experiment now making in the United States, to see if stability and freedom can possibly be united in the same country? By no means. We are only proving that we are free men; that God has highly exalted us in giving to our fathers that character out of which free institutions naturally grow, and which alone is capable of having and enjoying them. Free institutions are a blessing to those who have moral principle enough to observe the laws; to put themselves under the bonds of social order and equal rights; but an utter impossibility to all peoples who are vicious and unprincipled. Free institutions never originated in the hearts of men; they are the bright, consummate fruits of the gospel.

What have we then as the great conservative and progressive power by which our freedom can be preserved to us, and handed down to our children's children? How can we enjoy, in permanence, liberty and security? The Bible, and only the Bible can save us. The gospel of Jesus Christ brings in benevolence instead of selfishness, and thus makes the union of liberty and law practicable. The same system exactly that is necessary to the salvation of the individual soul, is essential to the stability of free government. The public mind must be so extensively leavened by the principles of the gospel; the general heart must be so far pervaded by the spirit of divine truth that the people will cheerfully consent to bear all public burdens; enact and maintain righteous laws; uphold the government against organized treason; and in general, do all things necessary in carrying forward a well organized state.

How can this result be secured among us, in our States and our Union? Not by the operation of force alone, or at all, because this force cannot be wielded unless the public heart is sound. How can public sentiment be purified, and the public heart be kept sound? By the preaching of the gospel, and by the inculcation of religious instruction in all wise methods. There is no other way. We are shut up to this necessity. Revolutions do not go backward. The people when they have gained power, will not yield it without a struggle. The attempt to restrict suffrage in this country, and to limit the franchises of the people, will lead to nothing but convulsion and blood-

shed; first to anarchy, and then to despotism; and then again to a new conflict with arbitrary power. No; we must take things as they are, whether pleased, or otherwise. The democratic principle is in the ascendant, and will have its course. Nor need we repine that we are under popular institutions. We should rather rejoice. It is our bright distinction among the nations of the earth. But we must remember, that we cannot have free institutions, unless we have, as a people, that 'fear of God which is the beginning of—political—wisdom.'

We are thus bound, as a nation—by the very conditions of national life and of permanent power; by our desire for freedom and stability, for liberty and social order—to be good, to grow in virtue and true piety. With us, corruption of manners and morals not only involves social evils, but the overthrow of all the safeguards of freedom, and the bringing in of despotic power. And this is well for us if we but understand our position, because we shall feel stronger obligations than any other people to walk in the law of the Lord, and sustain the institutions of the gospel. These things being so, we have a twofold reason for receiving the proposition at the head of this essay as a sacred truth. The fact, that nations living under every form of government owe their advancement chiefly to the influence of divine truth; and the other fact, that liberty, conjoined with civil order and a strong administration, cannot exist without the pervading influence of the gospel,—unite in proving that the Christian element is essential to the truest patriotism.

Many conclusions of great practical importance follow from this discussion. We can see our social, civil, political and religious duties, branching out in every direction; but I will not take up any time in specifying them. Two or three inferences of a more general nature, will detain us but a few moments.

It seems to be an inevitable conclusion, that all countries where the government is not founded on the broadest basis of freedom, are destined to suffer the pangs of a new birth, and to have the joy of a new creation. It was a remark of Dr. Chalmers, in his latter years, that it was clear to his mind, that the gospel, in its spread among the nations, would cause a revolution everywhere; that there was no political society on earth, which would not be found incompatible with the gospel. It would remodel all governments. The evil in our nation which needs to be removed, is slavery. In other nations, the evil may be in the structure of government, or in the frame-work of society; but it is everywhere. The gospel cannot tolerate the evil; it will not suffer a people to be at rest, until they are willing to ordain justice, in their national capacity, and act fairly in all their private

relations. Christ came not to bring peace, but a sword. In other words, his system will make war on every form and species of unrighteousness; will thus originate fierce conflicts with all sorts of social and political evils; and will finally inaugurate permanent peace, when opposition shall be subdued.

It is equally true, that in the coming ages of Christian ascendency, our free institutions only are capable of stability. They will be permanent, because they are based on the necessity of religion. They are just the institutions that are compatible with the prevalence of the gospel. They can live and flourish in a society where all are Christians. The spread of Christian truth, which will subvert all the despotic systems of the world, will at the same time, establish universal equality of political rights. It will place all men on a level in the courts of law. It will give full scope to the growth of every human soul. It will make the most of every child born into the world, and thus enlist the power of every arm, every head and every heart in support of the government which is thus based on the gospel. Such a government will be strong, without being despotic. It will be free, without endangering the rights of persons or of things. It will be strong and permanent, because it will be free. It will be mighty in the force of universal consent. It is our honorable distinction, that in the free States of this Union, we are under the influence of the Christian religion to such a degree that we can bear the exhilarating air of freedom without being intoxicated; that we intrust political power to all men, without subverting social order; or in the least weakening the force of law. If we grow worse; if the state morals shall deteriorate; if we trust to our power, our intelligence, or our native goodness, we shall find ourselves the prey of the vicious classes. Our refuge will be found in despotism. But if we feel our dependence on the Almighty, and make his truth our guide, we shall have increasing prosperity, with quiet and liberty, as long as the sun and moon endure.

It is, farther, a delightful prospect, that all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, in future days, as we now are; and even far more abundantly. The religion of Christ is to be received by them, as we are assured by the words of ancient prophets, and the deeds of modern evangelists; and thus they will be made capable of self-government, while they will be able to develop themselves to the utmost, in all normal ways. Slavery, serfdom, feudalism, despotism, monopoly, all stand in the way of human improvement. They forbid the souls of the masses to expand and enjoy. They cramp the soul, and thus dwarf the nations. The most infernal element in the system of slavery is, that it allows the soul of the slave to know only just enough to work the body in the interest of the master. It says to the living

spirit which has in itself infinite possibilities of progress, "Thus far shalt thou come, and no farther." But in a land of freedom, the great design is to develop, to expand, to elevate and ennoble the souls of men. By degrees, one restriction after another is removed; one monopoly after another is broken down; one prejudice follows another to oblivion, and the great public becomes a band of brethren. The law of God in the hearts of men makes them cheerfully obedient to all needful laws of the state; and impels them to ordain constitutions, and enact laws, which will secure the rights and promote the welfare of all the people, even the weakest and most unfortunate. The fears of over-cautious friends of freedom may be laid aside. Such thinkers as John Adams, Hamilton, Macaulay and De Tocqueville, though enemies of despotic power, and ardent friends of human improvement, had fears as they anticipated the inevitable growth of the democratic principle. If they had given due prominence to the promises of the gospel, that a new element has come into human society, which is destined to pervade and purify the nations, they might have contemplated the spread of liberal ideas, and the establishment of the most radically republican government, with more complacency.

In conclusion, I add that we may see the duty of all lovers of their country, to yield a personal obedience to the claims of the gospel. It is true that many men who make no pretensions to Christian piety are patriots. Profane and intemperate soldiers even, and skeptical statesmen, have hearts which throb with the spirit of patriotic fervor. But they lack the essential element of the truest patriotism, and therefore cannot do the most service for their country, in the wisest way, until they are ready to show the power of religion in their own lives, and to unite in all judicious efforts for the complete evangelization of all classes of our people. If the gospel is the only power which can preserve our free institutions, then surely it is the duty of all who love their country, to make full proof of the gospel.

ESSAY.

BY BRO. JOHN AIKEN, OF ANDOVER.

THE RELIANCE OF THE CHURCH ON THE ESTABLISHED MEANS OF GRACE FOR THE PROMOTION OF RELIGION.

I HAVE been requested to prepare and read, before this Conference, a "Short Essay" on this topic—"The reliance of the church on the established means of grace for the promotion of religion."

The terms in which the topic is stated would, on a liberal and yet fair construction, embrace the entire range of Christian duty, and the means employed for the performance of that duty. It is manifest, however, that no one could have proposed the discussion of so broad a theme, in one "Short Essay." Indeed it seems to me more probable, that the Committee who selected the topic, attached to the words, "established means of grace," a *restricted* and somewhat *technical* meaning; embracing within them merely the established ordinances and ministry of the church, and the usual services of the sanctuary.

In the discussion, I propose to give these words a somewhat broader and yet restricted signification. I propose to consider them as embracing the ordinances of the church, the ministry of the word, and the principal means on which, by general usage, our churches rely, for promoting religion, at home and abroad. To be more specific, I propose to speak briefly, of the ordinances and ministry of the church, of preaching, of the conference and prayer meeting, of the Sabbath school, and of labors and contributions for the support of missions, as means of grace, on which the church should rely. In the course of the discussion, I shall hope to reach the question which I suppose the Committee had particularly in view in proposing this subject.

Our topic affirms, that the church should rely on these means, for the promotion of religion; and implies, that it should not rely on other or different means, in disparagement of these.

In order, it is obvious, that these means should become effectual for the promotion of religion, they must be used in humility, and yet with earnest faith and hope; for their efficacy and value will depend on the blessing which God, of his grace, may be pleased to bestow upon

them. And the reliance of the church upon them will be proportioned to the strength of its conviction, that they are the divinely appointed and approved means for the sanctification and salvation of men. The *gospel* is declared to be 'the wisdom and the power of God unto salvation;' for herein is revealed that truth by means of which the Holy Spirit regenerates and sanctifies. This truth is set forth, proclaimed and enforced, by the ordinances and ministry of the church. This ministry and these ordinances, therefore, must be regarded as the *principal* agency and means by which the Christian church is to be gathered, edified, and perpetuated.

Of the impressive power of the Christian ordinances, I need not speak at length. So simple are they, so significant, and, in their significance, so touching to the sensibilities, that the soul which is not moved by them must be dead indeed.

The preaching of the word, however, constitutes the most generally effective means of diffusing the knowledge of Christ in the world. The power of the pulpit for impression depends in part on the character of its themes. They are the highest, broadest, deepest themes, that can occupy the thoughts of man; and are moreover intensely practical, involving, as they do, the highest welfare of every individual soul. It depends also, in part, on the perceived fact, that the truth which it proclaims, has done its appropriate work on the spirit of him who utters it. Let him who preaches commune with the truth, and with Him who reveals it, till his own mind is filled with light, and life, and power—till the very mind of Christ is given him—and now will he not be heard when he speaks? He has learned and knows what these words mean: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." And these: "The entrance of thy word giveth light." Now, when he addresses to his fellow-men these words of truth and life, he will speak *earnestly*, "in demonstration of the Spirit, and with power." And his prayers will be in harmony with his preaching, earnest, fervent, tender, effectual. From his inmost soul he will pray, with his Lord, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." May it not be that it is for the lack of this spiritual preparation, chiefly, that so many poor, and feeble, and fruitless sermons are preached? Yet preaching, with all its defects and faults, is God's established method "of saving them that believe."

The *ministry* of the church assumes different names and different functions, under different circumstances. The pioneer work pertains to the "*Evangelist.*" He is the missionary, and, as his name imports, he is *the preacher of the* "*good news.*" When converts are multiplied, he gathers them into the church, and, in due time, commits them to the care of the "*pastor,*" a more permanent minister, whose special duty it is, to watch over, feed, guide and protect his flock; and it is

to the ministry in this last form that our topic mainly relates. But *preaching* is the main work of the ministry, under either of its names.

To these principal means of grace, the most valuable established auxiliaries, for the promotion of religion at home, are the stated weekly meeting of the brethren for conference and prayer, the Bible class and Sabbath school. Even if not divinely appointed, in the specific form in which we use them, they are in harmony with the usages of primitive and apostolic times, and are of great value as auxiliary influences, in the promotion of religion.

A large majority of the members of our churches are, during the working days of every week, fully occupied by worldly cares and labors; and many are not occupied, merely, but engrossed. If they shall have become weary, care-worn, and depressed in spirit, they will find great refreshment and strength from social prayer and conference with brethren, on spiritual themes. At any rate, a break in the current of worldliness will be a relief and safeguard. It is a significant fact, that the most devout and spiritually minded members of our churches, most highly value and most constantly attend these meetings for prayer and conference. Indeed, the interest of the members of any church in these meetings, indicates, like a thermometer, the spiritual temperature in that church.

Of the Bible class and Sabbath school I shall speak briefly. Like other good things, they may be abused or perverted. They may be made a substitute for family instruction, on the one hand; or for the services of the sanctuary, on the other. These abuses, it need not be said, should be avoided. The common notion that the Sabbath school is specially adapted to children and youth, is, to my apprehension, a mistake. To adults of every age, even to the most thoughtful and intelligent, this social study of the Scriptures may be made the source of great profit and satisfaction. If I could give effect to my own convictions, I would have all the members of our congregations, of whatever age, whose health and circumstances permit, engaged habitually and earnestly in this delightful work. And the entire corps of teachers for every school should be taken, if possible, from the church with which that school is connected. No church can afford to surrender to strangers the benefits that result from this course of labor and discipline.

As additional auxiliary means of grace, of great value, I mention the labors that are performed, and the sacrifices that are made, in obedience to the command of Christ, in carrying forward his work of missions. "Go ye therefore," was his command, "and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,"—and "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospe[l]

to every creature." I speak not now of the exceeding greatness of the blessing which is conferred on them to whom the gospel of salvation is thus sent; but of the great blessing which our gracious Lord conferred on his followers, in assigning to them this work. He knew what was in man, and what sort of influences were needful to develop and perfect character. To make his followers as much like himself as possible, he committed to their care and fidelity his own precious work — that work for which he came to earth, and labored, and suffered, and died; saying unto them, "Freely ye have received, freely give." Many persons, who would be certified to sustain a good and regular standing in the church of Christ, seem to entertain very strange notions, both in regard to the work of Missions and to their own relations to it. Ask them to contribute to the Bible Society, and they excuse themselves, saying they think better of Missions; poor ignorant people could not, or would not, read the Bible, if they had it. By and by, ask them to contribute for Foreign Missions, and they declare themselves to be much more interested in Home Missions. A few months later, hand them a subscription paper for Home Missions, and their sympathies are found all alive for the poor heathen. And the young men who have not force and enterprise enough to educate themselves, they consider not worth helping. Thus do they divide this *one* work into fragments, and set one part over against another. The real fact is, that all such persons, nothwithstanding pretenses, do regard the whole matter of Missions as a burden to be avoided and rejected, just as far as some small respect for public opinion and very little self-respect will permit. Now let it be supposed that just such poor Christians as these should attain to some just views of the missionary work — its unity, the connection and interdependence of its several parts, its greatness, its dignity; let them sympathize deeply with the Lord Jesus, in the estimate which he puts upon this work, and compute the price he paid for it; let them comprehend something of the grace which permits such Christians, as they are, to be co-workers with him here, that they may be fellow-heirs with him in the eternal inheritance — shall we any more, think you, hear from them the old excuses and apologies? Does not even the thought of them fill them with shame? Now they regard it as their chiefest honor, that they are permitted thus to labor with and for Christ. They submit themselves and all their possessions to his disposal; and having given all, they will, doubtless, find the gracious promises of their Lord verified in their own experience: "Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come, everlasting life."

I have already intimated, that many of our church members very inadequately appreciate the value of these labors and sacrifices for Christian Missions, as a means of spiritual culture; may I be pardoned for believing that the same thing might be said, with equal truth, of some clergymen.

If then these views be correct, the church and all its members should confidently rely on these means of grace, for the promotion of religion; and should rely on no other or different means, to this end, which set aside or disparage these.

The divinely appointed remedy for sin and all its evil consequences, is to be found in the gospel of God's grace. Endeavors, therefore, to remove moral evils, by other than gospel methods, are essentially infidel, and deserve no one's confidence; for they will surely fail.

But it sometimes happens, that a people who have a church and Christian ordinances and a settled pastor, and who are accustomed to preaching, and all the other appliances for religious impression and edification that have been made the subjects of remark in this discussion, have been, are, and continue to be, to a great degree, unaffected by the things that are not seen. It may be that this state of apathy has continued, till the pastor has become discouraged, and a portion of the brethren, if not the whole church, have become unhappy and restless. All profess to desire a different state of things. How shall the desired change be effected? The old agencies, influences and methods seem to have been ineffectual; shall not more powerful and effective agencies and means be employed? The people so affected may not, in their present frame of spirit, be able to apprehend the precise difficulty in the case. It may be some prevalent spirit of worldliness, or a reliance on second causes, instead of Christ alone. Whatever it be, it will help to lead them away from the simplicity of faith, while they are seeking for a remedy. The expedient most frequently thought of under such circumstances, though less frequently, I am happy to believe, than formerly, whether by a discontented people or a discouraged pastor, is to call in the services of an evangelist of acknowledged power and reputation as a *revival preacher*. It is hoped, that by his clear exhibitions of truth, his powerful appeals to sympathy and passion, and his effective methods of influence, he may break up the prevailing apathy, and bring the people to immediate and decisive action in the great matter of salvation. Now under what conditions, if ever, may a church and pastor so circumstanced, wisely resort to this expedient?

By entering into this kind of service, it is worthy of note, the Evangelist passes out of his own appropriate and legitimate sphere, and enters into another — an anomalous one — that is full of peril. The promotion of revivals of religion becomes his business and profession.

Wherever he may be called to labor for this purpose, he is bound to have a revival; his living, his professional reputation and his pride demand it. Fearful temptations lurk around this condition of things; involving very great dangers, both to himself and others. The question is one of great and acknowledged difficulty. The conditions that control or affect the answer are so numerous and so various, that no specific answer can be given; and if it could be given, no power on earth could enforce it on parties inclined to a different course. It may, however, not be without profit to consider the answers that should be given under certain supposed conditions.

Suppose, then, that the pastor is opposed to the employment of any such assistant, while the church favors it; may the church employ the Evangelist, notwithstanding his objections, or constrain him by pressure, to acquiesce in their wishes? The answer is obvious—neither of these things may be. Any attempt to coerce the assent of the pastor would be oppressive and cruel, and success in such attempted coercion, would add to the wrong, the degradation and probable ruin of the pastor. By a solemn compact, ratified by sacred religious rites, the pastor has been constituted the teacher, guide and guardian of his people, in spiritual things. While he sustains the office, its prerogatives cannot rightfully be taken from him without his consent or fault. To hold him responsible for the spiritual welfare of his people, while they, in opposition to his wishes, put into his place and pulpit teachers in whom he does not confide, would be worse than absurd.

It may be supposed, again, that the pastor desires to call in the aid of an Evangelist, against the wishes of his people; may he do it? Certainly not. He can have no right to force on them instructions which they do not wish to hear, and which, it may be, they consider false and pernicious.

Another supposable condition of facts is, that the church and pastor are agreed in the desire to employ the same Evangelist. Here no question of right can be raised. The only parties concerned in the matter, are agreed in the opinion, that it is wise and expedient to obtain the services of the same man. Of course, if he consents, they must have him, and abide the consequences. What the consequences will be, in fact, can be known only from the experiment. What they might reasonably have been expected to be, were matters proper to be considered by the parties before they came to an agreement.

The considerations that address themselves to the discretion of a church and pastor, while they have this question under advisement, are many and various. The present spiritual state of the church, its preparation and fitness for such labors, and the state of opinion and feeling among the members, in regard to the employment of this Evangelist, are material points of inquiry. Considerations relating to

the pastor are scarcely less important; such as his wisdom, and discretion, and prudence, and his ability to stand in his place, and, under any pressure, maintain his pastoral prerogatives, which he has no right to surrender.

Other considerations, of still greater moment, relate to the character and temper of the proposed Evangelist. He may be a devout, discreet, humble, self-forgetful, prayerful man, who will do nothing but good —or he may be proud, ambitious, arrogant and self-willed, loose in sentiment, and unscrupulous in conduct—one who will be likely to do little but mischief—for just such men have been found in this ministry —or he may be a man of any other supposable character or temper, not inconsistent with a standing in a Christian church, whose fruit will be good or bad, like himself. All these matters should be carefully considered before reaching a decision of the question, "Shall the Evangelist be employed?" And the decision itself should embody the strength of all the facts, combined with that of much superadded prayer.

The history of such labors and of their results in the churches of New England, during the last forty years, would certainly lead to great caution and hesitation, in the employment of this kind of service, with a view to the promotion of religion. Many of the excitements got up, twenty-five or thirty years ago, by the proud and ambitious class of revivalists, and which they called religious revivals, proved to be very great calamities to the churches and communities in which they occurred.

In conclusion, I add this only. Were it in the power of this Conference to decide this question by a vote, yea or nay, it would avail nothing; for the responsibility is laid on every church and pastor, as a part of their necessary discipline, to decide all such questions, as they arise, for themselves.

MINUTES

OF THE

GENERAL CONFERENCE

OF THE

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES

IN

MASSACHUSETTS.

SEPTEMBER, 1864.

The General Conference of Massachusetts.

1864.

MINUTES

OF ITS

FIFTH ANNUAL SESSION,

HELD IN THE

CENTRAL CHURCH, FALL RIVER,

SEPTEMBER 13—15,

WITH

ESSAYS, REPORTS,

AND A

LIST OF THE LOCAL CONFERENCES, AND OF THE CHURCHES CONNECTED WITH THEM.

BOSTON:
PRESS OF T. R. MARVIN & SON, 42 CONGRESS STREET.
1864.

NOTICES.

THE meeting of the Conference in 1865, will be held in the North Church, Haverhill, commencing on Tuesday, the 12th of September, at 4 o'clock, P. M., and closing at 4 o'clock of the Thursday following.

Rev. Andrew L. Stone, of Boston, is elected the Preacher of the opening Sermon, and Rev. Eli Thurston, of Fall River, Substitute.

Essex North Conference will furnish the Preacher of the Sermon which is to be delivered before the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

The Scribes of the several Conferences are requested to forward to the Recording Secretary the names and the Post Office address of the Delegates appointed to the General Conference next year.

OFFICERS.

Provisional Committee.

Rev. RAYMOND H. SEELY, D. D., Haverhill.
Rev. JAMES T. MCCOLLOM, Bradford.
Bro. GEORGE COGSWELL, Bradford.
Bro. MOSES HOWE, Haverhill.
Rev. GEORGE W. KELLY.

Recording Secretary.

Rev. JOSHUA W. WELLMAN, Newton.

Statistical Secretary.

Rev. ALONZO H. QUINT, New Bedford.

Treasurer.

Bro. STEPHEN T. FARWELL, Cambridge.

MINUTES.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES OF MASSACHUSETTS convened in the Central Church, Fall River, September 13, 1864, at 4 o'clock, P. M., and a quorum not being present, owing to the inconvenient arrangement of Railroad trains, voted that after a season of devotional services, the Conference adjourn to meet at 7½ o'clock, P. M.

Tuesday evening. The Conference assembled, according to adjournment. After devotional services, conducted by Rev. Joshua W. Wellman, of Newton, a Sermon was preached by Rev. Zachary Eddy, D. D., of Northampton, from Col. ii. 10, "Ye are complete in Him."

ORGANIZATION.

At the close of Public Services, the Conference was called to order by Rev. Eli Thurston, Pastor of the Church, welcoming it, and organized by the choice of Bro. George F. Homer, of Brookline, Moderator, who opened the Meeting with Prayer.

Rev. Horace D. Walker was chosen Scribe.

Rev. George E. Hill, Dea. Jacob Perley, and Bro. Nathan Allen, were chosen a Committee on Credentials.

Rev. Eli Thurston, Rev. Mortimer Blake, and Rev. Israel W. Putnam, D. D., were chosen a Committee of Arrangements.

Rev. Isaiah C. Thacher, Rev. Richard Tolman, and Dea. Loring Lothrop, were chosen a Committee on Nominations.

Rev. James A. Roberts, Dea. Joseph S. Ropes and Rev. William A. McGinley, were chosen a Committee on the State of Religion.

The Committee on Credentials reported the following

ROLL OF DELEGATES.

Andover Conference:—

Rev. James H. Merrill, Andover.
Rev. Richard Tolman, Tewksbury.
Bro. Nathan Allen, Lowell.

Barnstable County Conference :—

Rev. William E. Caldwell, South Wellfleet.
Rev. Joseph B. Clark, Yarmouth.
Bro. David G. Eldredge, Yarmouth.

Berkshire South Conference :—

Rev. Josiah Brewer, Housatonic.
Bro. Joseph R. French, Stockbridge.

Brookfield Conference :—

Rev. David Peck, Barre.

Essex North Conference :—

Rev. Asa Farwell, West Haverhill.
Rev. John R. Thurston, Newburyport.
Dea. James T. Plummer, Rowley.
Dea. Daniel Adams, Newbury.

Essex South Conference :—

Rev. Isaiah C. Thacher, Gloucester.
Dea. Jacob Perley, South Danvers.
Dea. John W. Marshall, Rockport.

Franklin County Conference ;—

Hampden County Conference :—

Rev. Henry Powers, West Springfield.

Hampshire East Conference :—

Rev. Samuel J. M. Merwin, South Hadley Falls.
Dea. George W. Hubbard, Hatfield.

Mendon Conference :—

Middlesex South Conference :—

Rev. Thomas S. Norton, Dover.
Rev. George E. Hill, Saxonville.
Dea. James Farrar, Jr., Lincoln.

Middlesex Union Conference:—

Rev. George N. Marden, Boxboro'.
Bro. John F. Robbins, Littleton.

Norfolk Conference:—

Rev. Stephen H. Hayes, South Weymouth.
Rev. Horace D. Walker, East Abington.
Bro. Cyrus Brewer, Dorchester Village.
Dea. Elbridge Clapp, Quincy.

Old Colony Conference:—

Rev. Timothy F. Clary, Wareham.
Rev. Israel W. Putnam, D. D., Middleboro'.

Pilgrim Conference:—

Rev. Timothy G. Brainerd, Halifax.
Rev. Joseph Peckham, Kingston.

Salem Missionary Union:—

Rev. Joseph E. F. Marsh, Lynn.

Suffolk North Conference:—

Rev. William Barrows, Reading.
Dea. Loring Lothrop, Boston.

Suffolk South Conference:—

Rev. Andrew L. Stone, D. D., Boston.
Rev. John O. Means, Roxbury.
Dea. Joseph S. Ropes, Roxbury.
Bro. George F. Homer, Brookline.

Taunton and Vicinity Conference:—

Rev. Mortimer Blake, Taunton.
Rev. James A. Roberts, Berkley.
Bro. Benjamin King, Raynham.
Bro. Ammes A. Lincoln, Jr., Norton.

Woburn Conference:—

Rev. Charles R. Bliss, South Reading.

Worcester Central Conference:—

Rev. A. Hastings Ross, Boylston.
Rev. William A. McGinley, Shrewsbury.

Worcester North Conference:—

Rev. Milan H. Hitchcock, Westminster.
Dea. Abner H. Merriam, Templeton.

Worcester South Conference:—

Dea. Benjamin A. Nourse, Westboro'.

FROM CORRESPONDING BODIES.

Rev. Wm. R. Stevens, from the General Association of Minnesota.
Rev. Francis Horton, from the Rhode Island Conference.

The Conference then adjourned, to meet at 8½ o'clock Wednesday morning.

SECOND DAY.

Wednesday, Sept. 14. The Conference met and enjoyed an hour of devotional services; Rev. Andrew L. Stone, D. D., presiding.

FIRST ESSAY.

Rev. William M. Barber, of South Danvers, read an Essay on "The necessity of the Holy Spirit to give efficacy to all means for the conversion of men."

In the discussion which ensued, the following brethren participated: Rev. Eli Thurston, Rev. David Brigham, Rev. James T. McCollom, Rev. James A. Roberts, Rev. George Trask, Rev. John O. Means, Rev. Timothy G. Brainerd, Rev. Martin Moore, Rev. William Barrows, Bro. Daniel Adams, Rev. Elnathan Davis, Rev. Richard Tolman, Rev. Josiah Brewer.

AMERICAN MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION AND CHRISTIAN COMMISSION.

On motion of Rev. Eli Thurston, Rev. Elnathan Davis was allowed to present the cause of the Freedmen, and the Rev. Alonzo H. Quint to speak in behalf of the Christian Commission.

BUSINESS.

The Constitution and By-Laws were read.

Rev. John O. Means, of Roxbury, moved

1. That Article 7th of the Constitution be amended, by adding, "and they shall be *ex officiis* members of the Conference."

2. That Article 15th be amended, by adding, "and the ministers who preach the sermons shall be *ex officiis* members of the Conference."

This motion, according to the Constitution, was laid over for action at the next annual meeting of the Conference.

Rev. Alonzo H. Quint, of New Bedford, was chosen Statistical Secretary.

Bro. Stephen T. Farwell, of Boston, was chosen Treasurer.

Rev. John O. Means, of Roxbury, was chosen Auditor.

Bro. Stephen T. Farwell, Rev. Alonzo B. Rich, of Beverly, and Rev. Samuel J. M. Merwin, of South Hadley Falls, were chosen a Committee on Finance.

Rev. Andrew L. Stone, D. D., of Boston, Rev. Joshua W. Wellman, of Newton, and Rev. James H. Merrill, of Andover, were chosen a Committee on the state of the country.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE TO THE GENERAL ASSOCIATION.

Bro. Ebenezer Alden, from the Committee chosen at the last Annual Meeting, on the union of the General Conference, and the General Association, reported the following, which was adopted.

The Committee of the General Conference, appointed in 1863, to present to the General Association the action of the Conference on a proposition for a union of the two bodies, attended the annual meeting of the Association, at Springfield, for that purpose. Their report was received and considered, but not in a spirit which gave promise of a union on a basis satisfactory to the Conference. The result was a vote of the Association "to take no further action upon, and gives no further consideration to the subject."

The Conference then adjourned to 2½ o'clock, P. M.

Wednesday, P. M., 2½ o'clock. The Conference met and spent half an hour in devotional services.

SECOND ESSAY.

An Essay was then read by Rev. Henry M. Parsons, of Springfield, upon "The importance of distinctness in the exhibition of Biblical doctrine."

A discussion of the subject then followed, by Rev. Josiah Brewer,

Rev. Samuel J. M. Merwin, Rev. George Trask, Rev. Zachary Eddy, D. D., Rev. Elbridge G. Little, Dea. Joseph S. Ropes, Bro. Cyrus Brewer, Rev. Isaiah C. Thacher, Rev. Benjamin Judkins, Bro. Nathan Allen, Rev. Richard Tolman, Rev. Andrew L. Stone, D. D., Rev. Isaac P. Langworthy, and Rev. William Barrows.

BUSINESS.

The report of the Treasurer was presented, audited, and accepted.

The Committee on Finance reported: their report was accepted, and the Conference

Voted, That the Treasurer be authorized to notify the Scribes or Treasurers of the several Local Conferences, of the assessment upon each Conference of a sum equal to one dollar for each church, and to request their officers to collect the same immediately, and forward it to the Treasurer of the General Conference.

THE COMMITTEE ON HOME EVANGELIZATION.

Rev. William Barrows, in behalf of the Committee on Home Evangelization, appointed at the last Annual Meeting, reported, and the report was accepted.*

A discussion followed, participated in by Rev. Stephen H. Hayes, Rev. James T. McCollom, and Rev. Isaac P. Langworthy.

The further discussion was deferred until 11 o'clock, on Thursday.

COMMITTEE ON THE STATE OF THE COUNTRY.

This Committee presented their report which was unanimously adopted.

Resolved, That without one feeling either of despondency or of impatience, we watch the progress of the armies of the Union in putting down the most criminal rebellion the world ever saw; without despondency, for we believe God is on our side, and will give us in due time full and crowning success, and without impatience, for we have been instructed to interpret hopefully these divine delays, and have seen the issue ever widening and embracing more and more radical and precious revolutions and deliverances.

Resolved, That there can be no effectual re-establishment of the national authority by any negotiation which confesses the inability of the Government to subdue rebellion by force of arms, and proposes terms of peace to rebels still flying the flag of defiance.

Resolved, That the chief hope of rebellion is in the sympathy and distraction of a divided North, and that the surest and shortest way to peace

* See Report published in full with these Minutes.

is not to recall our armies and to relax our grasp upon the enemy, but to present a united loyal front, and an unconquerable determination to prosecute the war till the power of the Government meets no longer with armed resistance.

Resolved, That we rejoice in the recent victories won by our arms on the land and on the sea, as at once revealing the skill of our commanders, and the valor and endurance of our soldiers and sailors, and exhibiting evidence of God's gracious purpose to guide our marches and to give final victory to our cause.

Resolved, That the docility and industry, the discipline and heroism of the thousands of emancipated slaves, whether in scenes of peaceful labor or wearing the uniform of the national soldier, assert their claim to all the elements of a noble manhood, and the increased respect and confidence of all the friends of their race; and that we are moved to regard them with a more tender sympathy, to make them a subject of special prayer, and to do for them whatever is in our power.

Resolved, That we rejoice in the wide blossoming and harvesting of that public charity, by which such streams of treasure and so many products of industry have been contributed to the comfort and relief of our soldiers in the camp, the prison-house, the hospital, and the field; and in the personal labors of so many Christian men and women in bearing those material comforts to the beloved objects, and leading so many souls to Christ.

Resolved, That we believe it is the duty of Christian ministers to set forth by some appropriate public teaching the importance of the great principles at hazard in the impending and progressive political struggle, which is to issue in the choice of our national administration in such an eventful crisis of our national life.

The Conference then took a recess until 7½ o'clock.

THIRD ESSAY.

Wednesday evening. The Conference met according to adjournment, and was addressed by Rev. Alonzo H. Quint, upon "The work of our churches, as affected by the present state of the country." The audience united in singing "America," and then followed a discussion of the subject of the Essay, by Rev. Isaac P. Langworthy, Rev. Isaiah C. Thacher, Rev. Josiah Brewer, Rev. George Trask, Bro. Cyrus Brewer, Rev. Birdsey G. Northrup, Rev. Asa Farwell, Dea. Daniel Adams, and Rev. Joshua W. Wellman.

The Conference then adjourned.

THIRD DAY.

Thursday, September 15. Met according to adjournment, and spent an hour in devotional services.

REPORT OF DELEGATES TO CORRESPONDING BODIES.

Dea. Daniel Adams, delegate to the General Conference of Maine, reported his profitable visit and fraternal reception.

RESOLUTIONS.

The following Resolutions were unanimously adopted.

Resolved, That we heartily recommend to the churches of the Commonwealth, the plan of observing the fourth Sabbath evening of each month, as a meeting for prayer for our army and navy; and also the taking up at such meeting, a contribution for the treasury of the Christian Commission, which organization we anew commend, as an instrument of God for great good.

Resolved, That we cordially commend to our churches the American Missionary Association, as an efficient and successful channel for Christian labor among the Freedmen of the South.

Resolved, That we also cordially commend to our churches the two Tract Societies as efficient and successful channels of Christian labor among the Freedmen of the South.

NOTICE TO THE SCRIBES OF LOCAL CONFERENCES.

Resolved, That the Scribes of Local Conferences be requested to forward to the Recording Secretary of this Conference, the names, and the Post Office address, of the Delegates chosen to represent them in the General Conference next year.

REPRESENTATIVES OF CORRESPONDING BODIES.

Rev. Francis Horton presented, as a member thereof, the salutations of the Rhode Island Conference, and was cordially welcomed.

Rev. Augustus Walker appeared as representative of the churches "beyond the great river, the river Euphrates," to tell us of their sympathy, and awaken ours.

Rev. William R. Stevens addressed the Conference as delegate from the General Association of Minnesota.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE STATE OF RELIGION.

The Committee on the State of Religion reported, and their Report was accepted.*

* See Report published with these Minutes.

THIRD ESSAY.

At 10¼ o'clock, A. M., Rev. Lewis Sabin, D. D., presented an Essay upon "The claims and duties of the Sabbath, as a day of rest."

The discussion of this topic gave place to the consideration of the subject of

HOME EVANGELIZATION.

At 11 o'clock, according to previous vote, the discussion of this subject was resumed, and the speakers, by vote of the Conference, were limited to three minutes each.

The speakers were Rev. James M. Bacon, Rev. Alonzo B. Rich, Rev. William Barrows, Rev. Zachary Eddy, D. D., Rev. Raymond H. Seely, D. D., Bro. Nathan Allen, Rev. Henry B. Hooker, D. D., Rev. Isaac P. Langworthy, Rev. Alonzo H. Quint, Rev. Stephen H. Hayes, Dea. Daniel Adams, and Rev. Eli Thurston.

VOTES OF THANKS.

The following Resolutions were offered by Rev. William Barrows and adopted.

Resolved, That the full and hearty thanks of this Conference are due, and rendered, to the Christian citizens of Fall River, for the cordial fellowship in Christ, and the generous hospitality with which they have received this body.

Resolved, That the Conference return their grateful acknowledgments to the Old Colony and Newport, New Bedford and Taunton, and Taunton Branch Railroad Companies, and to the proprietors of the Steamer Bradford Durfee, running between Fall River and Providence, for free return tickets from this meeting.

Resolved, That this Conference tender their heartfelt thanks to the presiding officer of this body, for the orderly, prompt, urbane and Christian manner in which he has presided over it.

DELEGATES TO CORRESPONDING BODIES.

The following Delegates to Corresponding Bodies were appointed:

To the General Conference of Maine:
Rev. John O. Means, Roxbury.
Bro. Cyrus Brewer, Dorchester.

To the General Association of New Hampshire:
Rev. Daniel L. Furbur, Newton Centre.
Bro. Edward C. Damond, Concord.

To the Rhode Island Conference:
Rev. Horace D. Walker, East Abington.
Bro. Nathan Allen, Lowell.

To the General Association of Iowa:
Rev. George E. Hill, Saxonville.
Dea. Peter Smith, Andover.

COMMITTEE ON HOME EVANGELIZATION.

On motion of Dea. Joseph S. Ropes,

Voted, That the Committee on Home Evangelization be continued during the coming year, with authority to employ a salaried agent, who shall investigate the field, and report fully to the next Annual Meeting of this Conference.

PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE.

Rev. Raymond H. Seely, D. D., of Haverhill, Rev. James T. McCollom, of Bradford, Bro. George Cogswell, of Bradford, Bro. Moses Howe, of Haverhill, and Rev. George W. Kelly, of Haverhill, were chosen a Provisional Committee.

PLACE OF MEETING IN 1865.

Voted, That the next Annual Meeting be held with the North Church, Haverhill.

PREACHER FOR 1865.

Voted, That Rev. Andrew L. Stone, D. D., of Boston, be invited to preach the opening Sermon at the next Annual Meeting of the Conference, and that Rev. Eli Thurston, of Fall River, be his substitute.

PUBLICATION OF DOCUMENTS.

Voted, To publish the Minutes of this Conference, the Essays read, the Reports on the State of Religion and on Home Evangelization, and also a list of the Local Conferences of the State, with the times and places of meetings, and their officers and names of churches connected with them.

Voted, That the Recording Secretary, the Statistical Secretary, and the Treasurer, be the Publishing Committee.

The Minutes were read and approved.

Voted, To adjourn, to meet at one o'clock, P. M., for public worship and the observance of the Lord's Supper, and that after these services, the Conference shall be adjourned, *sine die*.

Thursday, P. M. The Conference assembled at one o'clock. Devotional services were conducted by Rev. William M. Barber, and a Sermon was preached by Rev. Ariel E. P. Perkins, from Romans, viii. 17: "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

Rev. Israel W. Putnam, D. D., and Rev. Samuel J. M. Merwin, officiated at the Lord's Table. After which, in accordance with a previous vote, the Conference was adjourned, *sine die*.

GEORGE F. HOMER, *Moderator.*

HORACE D. WALKER, *Scribe.*

A true copy of the Minutes.

Attest, JOSHUA W. WELLMAN,
Recording Secretary.

CONSTITUTION.

1. This body shall be called the GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES IN MASSACHUSETTS.

2. The object of this Conference is to secure Christian union, fellowship and intercourse among the churches; to promote spirituality; incite to a more elevated piety, and stimulate Christians to greater activity and efficiency in advancing the Redeemer's kingdom.

3. This Conference shall, under no circumstances, exercise ecclesiastical authority, or interfere with the government or discipline of the churches, or consent to hear appeals, or give advice in ecclesiastical causes of any kind.

4. Each Local Conference, composed of evangelical Congregational Churches within the State, may appoint five delegates to attend the annual meeting of the Conference, two of whom shall be pastors of churches, and three lay members.

5. The officers of the Conference shall be a Moderator, a Recording Secretary, a Statistical Secretary, and a Treasurer.

6. The Moderator shall be chosen by ballot from among the delegates present, and shall preside during the meeting for which he is chosen.

7. The Secretaries and Treasurer shall be chosen by ballot, and continue in office three years.

8. The Recording Secretary shall keep a fair record of the doings of each meeting, in a book to be kept for that purpose, which shall be transmitted to his successor in office.

9. The Statistical Secretary shall collect and arrange such statistics as the Conference may order; shall distribute all documents received for the use of the Conference, or printed by them; and shall preserve a copy of all the publications of the Conference.

10. The Treasurer shall receive all money raised for the use of the Conference, disburse the same as directed, and present an annual report, audited as the Conference may direct.

11. Any ordained pastor or member of a Congregational Church within the bounds of the State, shall be eligible to the offices of Secretary, Statistical Secretary and Treasurer.

12. The Conference may receive delegates from other State evangelical religious bodies, representing Congregational Churches, who shall be considered honorary members, and be admitted to the privilege of participating in the deliberations of the meeting, but shall not be allowed to vote; and the Conference may reciprocate the courtesy by appointing delegates to such bodies.

13. Twenty-five regularly appointed delegates shall constitute a quorum.

14. The Conference shall hold an Annual Meeting on the second Tuesday in September, at such place as shall be designated, to commence at four o'clock, or other more convenient hour, in the afternoon, and to close at four o'clock in the afternoon of the Thursday following.

15. A Sermon shall be preached on the evening of the first day of the meeting; and another, adapted to the occasion, on the afternoon of the last day, to be followed by the Lord's Supper, to be administered generally without remarks.

16. Brief narratives of the state of religion within the bounds of Local Conferences, shall be presented in writing to a Committee appointed to receive them, which shall be embodied in a Report and read by the Committee, at such time as the Conference may appoint.

17. Other services of the Conference shall consist of devotional exercises, addresses and discussions upon subjects of practical religious interest, together with the objects of benevolent enterprise sustained by the churches, to be provided for and arranged as shall be laid down in the By-Laws.

18. The Conference shall establish By-Laws and Rules of Order for the regulation of its business, which shall be adopted by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any annual meeting.

19. Any proposition to alter or amend a By-Law shall be made at the annual meeting previous to the one at which it is acted upon.

20. Any article of this Constitution may be altered or amended by a two-thirds vote, at any annual meeting, provided that the proposition is made at any previous annual meeting, excepting that *article third* shall be held unalterable.

BY-LAWS.

1. At the appointed hour of meeting, the Pastor of the church where the meeting is held shall call to order; the certificates of delegates shall be immediately presented to the Recording Secretary, and a quorum being declared present, a Moderator shall be chosen.

2. The Moderator shall open the meeting with devotional exercises, and at the opening of each subsequent session, shall appoint some person to offer prayer.

3. A Committee of three shall be appointed to act as a Committee of Arrangements.

4. At each meeting, a Provisional Committee, of five persons, shall be appointed to arrange the schedule for the subsequent meeting; to designate the place, and to nominate a preacher for the opening sermon.

5. The preacher of the sermon before the communion, shall be chosen by the Local Conferences, in alphabetical order.

6. In order to separate the business from the religious services, special times shall be designated, at which all business of the Conference shall be transacted.

7. Whenever it shall appear to the Committee appointed to embody the naratives of the state of religion, that the religious condition within any Local Conference justifies a more detailed recital, a delegate from every such Conference may make verbal statements to the meeting, under the direction of the Committee.

8. The Conference shall determine, by vote, what objects of Christian benevolence may from time to time be presented, and the particular objects to be presented at any meeting shall be determined by the Provisional Committee.

9. The Constitution and By-Laws shall be read near the opening of the session, on the second day.

10. When a report is made, the question shall be, "Shall the report be accepted?" If resolutions are appended, the question may be divided at the request of any member, and the vote taken separately on accepting the report, and on accepting the resolutions.

11. The motion for the "previous question" shall be put without debate, and if carried, the main question shall be immediately put.

12. The Conference shall observe the usual rules of order in deliberative bodies, in all cases where it has no special rule of its own.

13. Before adjournment, the minutes of the meeting shall be read for approval.

REPORT ON THE STATE OF RELIGION

IN THE

CHURCHES CONNECTED WITH THE CONFERENCE.

WHAT should the Report be, of the churches of the ever-living, the always present, and the certainly coming Redeemer? What but a continual triumph in his grace without fear; an unwavering confidence in his promises, without distrust; and a faithfulness to his work at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances, even unto death? What should it be, when He who walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks, who searcheth the hearts and the reins, draweth near where his people meet together, and hearkeneth to what they say to each other and to what they think of his name. What does he hear?

Let us listen to what his churches say.

The general statement is: "That this year has been one marked by no signal success or disaster to the cause of Christ." "While some churches have to mourn over the desolations of Zion," others "are enjoying a good measure of external prosperity, though no general outpouring of the Spirit can be reported."

Yet it is said, by some churches, "This has been a year of more than ordinary good; we have been blessed with precious revivals; the influences of the Spirit have descended, and with great energy have wrought a renewing work, and one which has resulted in the addition of many to the churches."

It is also said that, "The outward interest of the house of God has not suffered from the pressure of the many claims upon the attention and liberality of the friends of religion."

The various benevolent organizations to which the people of God usually contribute, have shared more largely than usual in their prayerful sympathy, and pecuniary support." Some "churches never contributed so much to the usual objects of benevolence." "Some parishes" in these trying times, "have shown their appreciation of their pastor's labors, by generous donations, and an increase of salary."

In many parishes, "the number of Sabbath worshipers in the house of God is increasing;" the Sabbath schools and the cause of Temperance are flourishing. "A work of grace has commenced among the young, and efforts to save the impenitent have not been without success."

From the whole, it appears that "the churches are doing their regular work with patience, and with considerable success, though they cannot speak of extensive revivals of religion."

It may be said that the churches are loyal to their country. "Deep and abiding sympathy is felt with what the Government is doing to save the nation from anarchy and ruin." "Sympathy with the oppressed, and with the noble-hearted soldiers, suffering for us on the field of battle, in hospitals and in prisons, manifests itself in prayer to God without ceasing, and in a readiness to sacrifice treasure and life itself, when called for, to carry our beloved country safely through the present struggle."

There is something in the Report; something great and good, for which we are thankful. It might have been better, it ought to have been better; but we rejoice in hope of the glory of God, when they shall not say, 'know the Lord; for all shall know him from the least to the greatest.'

Truly the clouds are dark—our country is in the deep—the waters roar and are troubled, and the mountains shake with the swellings thereof: yet we see the rainbow carried in the bosom of the storm; it assures us that the clouds are breaking, and ere long we shall have to say, 'Lo, the winter is past, and the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.'

James Austin Roberts.
Joseph S. Ropes.

REPORT ON HOME EVANGELIZATION.

THE Committee on Home Evangelization, appointed under the Resolutions adopted by the Conference at its last Annual Meeting, would respectfully present the following REPORT.

The Resolutions under which this Committee have their appointment and action, recommended that each District Conference make the subject of Home Evangelization a prominent and a permanent topic of interest in its meetings. To insure this, the Resolutions urged on the Local Conferences the policy of moving each church in their connection to bring under the influences of the gospel as far as possible, by personal labor and in such ways as the churches might judge best, that large portion of our population not now reached by the common means of grace. It was contemplated that each church would go into this outside and unfenced field and break up all the new land and all the fallow ground within their proper limits, and then at the meetings of the District Conferences, report their labors, talk over the facts, the various modes of labor, the necessities, encouragements, discouragements, Christian obligations, etc., and so provoke each other to good works in this most important branch of church labor.

The Resolutions also contemplated a Committee in each Conference who should have a supervision of this department within their bounds, and should make annual reports to the Committee on Evangelization in this Conference. It was expected that these Reports from our twenty-two Conferences would furnish the material for this Report, and so bring this vast work before us annually. Here it was hoped the subject would have the time and attention of the Conference, according to its relative merits.

The Committee of last year submitted this plan of labor for Home Evangelization in our State. The plan was without discussion and quietly adopted by the Conference, quietly printed and circulated in its Minutes, and, with few exceptions, it has been quiet ever since.

Your present Committee at once took measures to bring the attention of the District Conferences to the plan and work, by soliciting selected individuals in each, to introduce the subject into their respective bodies. So far as the Committee are able to learn, only four of

these twenty-two Conferences have taken action: Pilgrim, Essex South, Hampden, and Norfolk. If others have acted, they have not reported, and their work is unknown to the Committee.

At the Fall meeting of the Pilgrim Conference a Committee was appointed, to whom this topic was assigned. They arranged for a discussion in the Spring meeting, on the necessity, the obstacles, the means and the encouragements for Home Evangelization, within their limits. The Report of the Committee says: "The discussion occupied a considerable portion of the time at our meeting in Hanson, and awakened, as was expected, great interest. * * * The discussion made, if possible, more patent the fact that there is not a Local Conference in the Commonwealth where there is greater need of this work than the one which embraces this old Pilgrim soil, and yet that the obstacles to success in it are primarily and mostly those which are found in the hearts of the members of our churches. The conviction was expressed that something could be done, and must be done, to reclaim these "old wastes," but no definite plan was proposed by the Conference for the action of the several churches. * * * We cannot say that we have done any thing except to begin to look at the work, and to get a little alarmed about it."

The Essex South Conference issued a circular Letter to the churches and obtained returns from a part of them. From the returns made the Committee say: "It would appear that about one-half of the population in this section of the country habitually neglect public worship of any Christian type. In some towns the proportion is found to be not more than one-quarter, or one-third; in others full one-half, and in others, still, full two-thirds. This Conference is comprised of twenty churches, representing twelve townships, and the city of Salem. Taking the estimated population within the bounds of their respective parishes, and comparing it with the returns made to us of both occasional and habitual worshipers in their respective congregations, and we are justified in saying that not more than one-half of the population attend, even occasionally, upon the means of grace."

In speaking of the varied labors of different churches, the Report continues: "Several of the churches have sustained Mission Schools. Some members have exerted themselves with commendable zeal to increase the number of attendants, both at the parent and mission school, from families that neglect the house of God. The church in South Danvers has sustained, on the outskirts of the parish, for several years, at considerable expense, a chapel enterprise with stated preaching and a vigorous Sabbath School. This has been followed with gratifying results, both in evangelizing that community, and in bringing new converts into the parent church. The church in Glouces-

ter Harbor, within two years past, has succeeded in gathering from the thousands of neglected children in that place, one hundred or more into their Sabbath School, by clothing them and looking after them. Some churches have instituted and sustained systematic Tract Distribution. Others have sent out Committees of visitation, to stimulate the members to hold religious conversation with households, to visit families that neglect public worship, with the hope of securing their attendance."

The following passage in the Report of the Essex South Conference, we quote as expressive of a wide feeling and common practice in our churches: "Some of our churches have no Mission Schools, no prayer meetings on the outskirts of the parish, no systematic tract distribution, no systematic visitation of the neglecters of the sanctuary by church members. All their efforts tend to centralization, while aggressive measures are neglected; social and Christian contact with the irreligious, for the sake of their good, shunned; old prejudices cherished; old, effete habits of effort doggedly adhered to; home heathenism in the mean time becoming strong, Banyan-like, with its many trunks."

The Essex South Conference appears to have taken hold of this work of Home Evangelization with much earnestness. Indeed it can hardly be otherwise, when a Conference has once earnestly and fully discussed and prayed over such an inviting, suffering field.

The Norfolk Conference issued a Circular, and obtained reports of action in twelve of its churches. These twelve reports included a population of 46,860. Of these, it is estimated that 58 per cent may attend public worship of some kind, yet the Report of the Committee says, that from careful estimate, they are persuaded that "not more than one-third of the people have any right to be reckoned as habitual attendants on any public worship whatever." The number of church sittings to this population is less than 22,000, or less than one-half of the population. The number of children in the public schools is 9,406, and in the Sabbath schools 5,569. The Committee say: "In regard to these figures, they are only an approximation to the truth, and yet we are satisfied they reveal an alarming state of things.

Hampden County Conference has gone so systematically and thoroughly into the work as to hold many meetings, raise funds and put a permanent and constant laborer into the field—the Rev. W. C. Foster. After being seven months in the field he reports thus: "I have labored in nine parishes, have addressed 266 gatherings of the people, or rather preached about this number of times. I have made 600 family visits, always conversing upon the subject of personal religion, and praying, with one single exception, where the head of the family would not have praying—would not have us ask for him

and for his the blessings of health, happiness and salvation. Some Christian brother has gone with me in these visits, to introduce and help me. The churches by their committees have, after our visits, made about 500 more. We have sought with all possible fidelity and affection to explore the more destitute regions, such as are found in all towns, which are most distant from the meeting houses, and to make it next to impossible for any from these places to go to the bar of God and say, 'No man cared for my soul.' I have had the names of 300 hopeful converts. How many of these are real conversions, how many recent, and how many old hopes revived, I cannot tell. I do not think it safe to count young converts till they unite with the church, and then the tares grow with the wheat. But on the whole, I think the churches—stirred and helped a little perhaps, by the Messenger sent them by the Conference—have done a great and very necessary work. They show how the gospel can be preached to every creature, and that it is where they have been, and in so doing they themselves have been greatly blessed."

These embrace all the Reports given in. We have only four from twenty-two Conferences. But even these show us several facts: as, that from one-fourth to one-half our population is unreached by the means of grace now employed, that Conferences and individual churches can gain access to this population in religious labor, that wherever the efforts have been made, reasonable and highly encouraging success has attended the labors. Yet we have the discouraging fact that so far as the Committee can learn, only four Conferences have entered on this work.

These things being so, your Committee venture to call the attention of the Conference to some suggestions, somewhat novel, on this subject of Home Evangelization.

From different parts of the State we receive reports of investigation, and estimates that one-fourth, one-third, and even one-half the population, habitually and unnecessarily absent themselves from any and all places of public worship. They do not willingly put themselves under the public means of grace in ordinary use, and we include, when we say this, all Christian sects and denominations. Evidently the powers of Christianity to reach such are not exhausted. We have not yet pressed our holy religion to its maximum of ability to sanctify communities and families, and save souls.

As a general statement, though with some exceptions, it may be said that we have gone far enough in offering the means of grace in public worship at convenient locations. Almost all, who are willing to go, can find a house of God and evangelical teachings, within comfortable distance. Still, these per cents of one-fourth, one-third, one-half,

do not come. Are we to let them alone? Have we any Christian right to let them alone? Christianity began by the going out of the preachers and brethren, not the coming in of the hearers. The highways and hedges were the original parishes. We cannot settle down in the notion that Christianity has done the most and the best it can, while every fourth, or third, or second man is left in his sinful and unbelieving quiet, unwarned, uninvited. The Fejee, the Caffre, the Esquimaux, the Chinese, will not come for the gospel and to our meeting, and so we carry the means of salvation to them. But why labor so extensively and earnestly to bring them to Christ, and yet neglect half a million of our neighbors? Some day our religion will prove a greater success at home; and in that day we shall find ways and means to press Home Missions beyond the walls of churches, and beyond the limits of parishes. The present church of Christ should hasten that day. We have no right to let those outsiders alone, any more than the secessionists. Suppose they do not want the gospel, that is no reason why we should not study for, and adopt the means that will compel them to give it attention. We cannot be quit of our obligations to Christ without making a constant pressure of the gospel on this large class.

And as a general thing, the local churches should do the work. They are able to do it; our Christianity obligates them to do it; and the consecration of the membership to Christ is a promise to do it. It is not a work for hired spiritual employees. There are some duties that Christians can not do by proxy, and this is one of them. Every candle in the church must do its own shining. When Andrew has found the Christ, he must go out and hunt up Simon Peter, and Philip must find Nathaniel.

We need a different type of religion. We have a meeting-house religion; we also need a religion without a meeting-house. Now our churches are too much like business offices with business hours, as if we should post on our church doors the notice: "Office hours from ten to eleven, A. M., and from two to three, P. M., week days excepted." Here we both hold and do the most of our religious service. We want a piety that can live and be vigorous out doors, and from Monday to Saturday, looking up the lost sheep and the lost piece of money. We want a piety that can thread the lanes, and alleys, and attic stair ways, go over on the back road, out three miles to the Red School House, and five miles to the Four Corners, where there is a saw and grist mill, a store, a dozen families, and no Sabbath, or Sabbath school.

And we have much of this piety, but in an unemployed, latent state. It does not need creating, so much as developing, and stimulating, and directing. In this work of Home Evangelization, the great need

has been to arouse, concentrate, and guide in proper channels of labor, the sympathies and energies of the church. When this has been done, as we see from our Reports, the churches have gone into the work earnestly and successfully. This enterprise has been under discussion, and a kind of management, for several years, but with little progress, because it has not had the advantages of a permanent and constant concentrating, quickening and directing power. It has been slidden along through different committees, with changing, spasmodic, and intermittent processes of labor. The enterprise has lacked an organization to undertake it, an authoritative body to employ constantly a devoted, energetic head to superintend it. Only in this way can we hope that the work will be systematized and prosecuted successfully through the State. Mere recommendations, and the sending out of plans to the churches, are a failure. Incitements, suggestions, the experience of others, and encouragement, are what the churches need. An able, discreet, self-denying, godly man, is needed to give his whole energy to this work. He is needed to attend the State and Local Conferences, and Clerical Associations, and other Christian Conventions, and to visit pastors and churches, to talk and preach, and organize, in the interests of this enterprise.

Feeling this to be the imperative want of this undertaking, and after years of trying and unsuccessful experience, your Committee have been led to look for a body or organization that can properly appoint, support and instruct such a Superintendent of Home Evangelization. It does not seem expedient, with our present number of benevolent organizations, to create another, expressly to do this work. We do not want another set of Christian machinery in the field.

This Conference does not seem to be designed or adapted to establish such an agency, go into the collection of funds for its support, and assume its control. In the view of your Committee the field and labor under consideration are too closely related to the Home Missionary work, and too much a part and parcel of it, for any other organization, old or new, to take it in charge. The distinction between Home Missions and Home Evangelization appears to be but a question of degrees. The Home Mission field and work are now marked off by certain by-laws and usages, that do not include the work in question. But the experience of years, and the exigencies of the hour may suggest the propriety of removing a fence that makes two nominal fields, where there is really but one.

Reasoning *a priori* and apostolically, we can not see that a meeting-house, or organized church and society, or a resident preacher, or a certain per cent contribution by the people, toward the support of the mission, should in all circumstances be made prerequsites to missionary labor in any community.

If one half a community habitually absent themselves from all places of public worship, they certainly constitute an inviting field for Christian labor, and the ground might well be called, as the labor, Home Missionary. And if a Christian minister, having it as his special work, could excite and aid the churches in this community and vicinity, to look faithfully after the salvation of one-half their neighbors, we think the Home Missionary Society might properly make him, and joyfully call him, one of their laborers.

But your Committee do not propose to argue this proposition. Our purpose in this Report is only to submit the facts reported to us, give conclusions from them and from the experiences of former years, and make the suggestion whether the enterprise of Home Evangelization in this Commonwealth might not best be managed for the interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom by our Home Missionary Society.

The Committee therefore recommend the following Resolution for the adoption of the Conference.

Resolved, That the Massachusetts General Conference respectfully suggest to the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society to inquire into the expediency of their taking this field of Home Evangelization within their limits of labor, putting the same under the superintendence of an able, energetic and godly man, who shall devote his entire attention to it.

Under such an arrangement, your Committee foresee the objection that this will remove this important work of the churches from their sympathies, counsels and encouragements, as they could be manifested in this their only General Organization. But it is to be hoped that in consummating the arrangements contemplated in the Resolution, such Superintendent might be made to have some such connection with this body, as would bring this vast field and the Christian work done in it, annually before the Conference.

All which is respectfully and unanimously submitted.

WILLIAM BARROWS,
JAMES T. MCCOLLOM,
MARSHALL S. SCUDDER,
WILLIAM THURSTON,
HENRY M. DEXTER.

ESSAY.

BY REV. WILLIAM M. BARBER, SOUTH DANVERS.

THE NECESSITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO GIVE EFFICIENCY TO ALL MEANS FOR THE CONVERSION OF MEN.

WHAT we anticipate concerning the divine energy in the conversion of men, is fully met in the provisions of redemption. God being what he is, the Author and the Finisher of all that is saving, we are led to expect that he will apply what his heart has devised, and his hand wrought out. Hence it is that we approve of the doctrine of the Spirit, as a cardinal truth of the Bible.

But, notwithstanding the prominence, given to his work in the Scriptures, notwithstanding the professed belief of the church in his efficiency, amid the oscillations of experience incidental to her militant state, the tendency seems to be to depart from dependence on his power and grace.

Although the church received her first impulse in the divine life, by an extraordinary gift of the Spirit, any unusual bestowment of his power has been considered a strange thing, even by those who stand aghast at ancient unbelief. Alluding to the suddenness of conversion in the Irish revival, Professor Gibson writes: "Such instantaneous seizures, so different from the slow methods to which the church has been accustomed, were naturally regarded with suspicion and alarm, as introducing a new process of regeneration." This shyness at the supernatural appears in other forms. Almost every case of defection in doctrine, coming before ecclesiastical courts and councils, exhibits the same tendency. How comes it to pass that men wander out among laws, means, agencies? How few have ever been on trial for a "heretical cleaving to the direct intercourse of the Spirit with the heart"?

Nor is this confined to individuals. In one communion we hear it manifesting itself in a clamor for symbolism; men are to be subdued and purified, by rites. In another, highly cultivated intellect is to win souls. In a third, sympathetic address is to melt and make over

the hard heart. In how many Christian gatherings, is the loudest cry for the Spirit, instead of for accomplished men and rousing means? From how many Christian schools do the dew of Christ's youth come, beaming with the impression that the enticing words of man's wisdom are of secondary import to the demonstration of the Spirit? Is it not significant that this leaning is all to one side? To turn the church from the Holy Ghost as her converting power, is not this the design of the adversary?

That we may be led to value the Spirit's efficiency *more highly* than the instrumentality of means, the Conference is invited to the consideration of the following things.

First, that the condition of the mind, in its relation to converting truth, renders the power of the Spirit necessary to convert it.

When the mind is met by a proposition in Euclid or the facts in Motley's Histories, on considering the evidence, it assents to the truths presented. But the law of God and the gospel of Christ meet with a different reception. And this, as experience shows, for two reasons, (1) these truths claim the mind's obedience, and (2) they are spiritual in their nature, and being so, are not discerned unassisted of God.

Some say, Perfect the mode of conveying truth; urge it by convincing argument, kindling sympathy, electric eloquence; hallow all by the spirit of prayer, and conversion will follow. In other words, increase external pressure, and the mind will yield. Now, though God frequently honors well-chosen means to convert, it must be maintained that *complete* dependence cannot be placed upon them.

One representative fact serves for a thousand. The seventh chapter of the Acts reports an able sermon—a learned, argumentative, pointed, practical discourse—preached in a season of revival, by a revivalist, preached with tremendous power, and producing a wonderful effect. We envy not the heart that reads it now without a sensation. But was it a subduing sermon? Did it humble and convert the hearers? The very reverse. And yet, was it not fitted to convince of sin and lead to repentance? Had Stephen no "genius for preaching;" did he not choose fit illustrations; was not his research exhaustive; was not his style vivid, dramatic, electric; were not his appeals pungent, personal, effective? And yet that preacher died by his hearers' hands.

Now, is it from without the mind, or from the mind itself, that a different reception to divine truth must be secured? Keep away a transformation by the renewal not so much of the mind, as of *the spirit of the mind*, and where is the hope of change? From the mind itself? Does ice thaw itself? As soon may we expect this, as expect that mind *willing* to resist truth will yield to it. Something other than

motive must be used, for what is motive, but more of that which the mind resists?

May we hope then that the mind will inhale energy of itself? Self renewal is a contradiction. As soon may we expect one, by an exertion of his muscles, to annihilate his own weight. Shall we look for a change by an afflatus from another mind, of the character and grade as the one resisting, or does the nature of the case force us, in accordance with Paul's divine philosophy, thus to reason, and thus conclude: "What man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of a man which is in him? Even so, the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God. Now, we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, *that we might know* the *things* freely given us of God. The natural man receiveth not the *things* of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, for they are spiritually discerned." Has any metaphysician from Locke to Hamilton discriminated more accurately, or reasoned more soundly, on mind as related to a certain kind of truth, than this philosopher has done?

Secondly, the necessity of depending on the Spirit in conversion is deepened by extending the former thought, and considering that the truth itself, and the means to convey it, require a divine influence to give them effect.

Apart from its spirituality, the message of Christ crucified must be *so commended* as to exhibit Christ in his power and glory, and no one can do this *effectively* who is not in command of the glory that excelleth. What were the lessons of Rubens's picture of "Peace and War," without his power to give his ideas certain lights and shades; and of what service his genius as a painter, did his master-piece lie in the dark? The truth about Christ saves and sanctifies, but it is that truth *so presented* as to secure belief. If not seen in its glory, how can it be received in the love of it? The bare reality of things does not bring peace and purity. The gospel is as true now as ever it can be. "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures," can be as truly uttered by us as it was by Paul to the Corinthians.

Since, on its ordinary presentation, this truth does not have free course, does not become spirit and life, how is *it* to be the Spirit's instrument of change, if there is not imparted to it a vividness, a reality, a life; in short, if the Spirit of Truth does not *so* enliven it as to secure attention and response to its claims. The Spirit works, and in so far as we can understand, he works on spirit. Philosophically, we say that he cannot work on anything else; and, indeed, he may give this vividness to the truth by his action on the mind. But can we embrace all his methods? How he works *naturally* we can suppose;

how he works *supernaturally* we cannot divine. 'Thou canst not tell whence he cometh, *nor whither he goeth.*' And in response to this, the convert says, "There is a change somewhere, whether in me, or in the gospel, I cannot tell."

Were this a treatise, and not an essay, it might be proper farther to investigate the nature of his influence. But this is only a popular discussion. The language of appearance, however, justifies the thought considered. Experience, too, has much to do with the idea that truth has power, when peculiarly commended. So have the Scriptures. It is *with* the word of truth, *by* the gospel, *through* a knowledge of the *glory* of Christ, *by* the *demonstration* of the Spirit that conversion occurs. Where his demonstrations appear is not stated. And what else makes it the preacher's duty to exhibit truth in an endless variety of methods, than the fact that the Spirit himself commends truth by a variety of methods?

And let this be considered, that faith in the Spirit's commendation saves the church from untold distress. Without it, she will become fitful or formal. Something she must have to impress men; by demonstrations of the truth she must meet a craving in the soul. Are men of skill, then, to have a monopoly of converting power? or, must she resort, as some propose, to an illuminated triangle to teach a Trinity; a crucifix to exhibit the Atonement; lights on an altar to enlighten mind on the truth of a present Spirit in the church. To retain vitality in religion, the church must cling with the tenacity of a death grasp to the Living Spirit to give her instrumentalities a saving effect.

Thirdly and mainly, the church must consider that unless she is prepared to abandon the most express declarations of the divine word, her chief reliance must be on the efficiency of the Spirit.

It is full of interest to notice the method of the Bible in inculcating this doctrine. Have you not observed how ready the Bible is to deny and affirm, in the same sentence, what is denied and affirmed in this essay? Does man convert himself? "No man can come unto me except the Father which hath sent me draw him." Will an increase of means alone convert? "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." Will vivid portraiture alone gain him for heaven? "Except a man be born again he cannot *see* the kingdom of heaven." Will not the church's earnest desire impress and overpower? "Which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, *nor of the will of man*, but of God." Are not excitements of avail to rouse men? "Bodily exercise profiteth little," that is, the contortions of fanatics are of little value; "but godliness"—that is God-like-

ness, 'is profitable in all things, having the promise of the life that now is, as well as that which is to come.'

But there is one passage in which this doctrine stands out in bold relief. It is a finality in the line of appeal. I allude to the revelation of Christ's divinity to Peter. When Peter confessed his faith in a Divine Redeemer, Jesus said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven." Now, observe that Christ denies that his own preaching and miracles had, *of themselves*, brought Peter to the knowledge of this truth. The Father in heaven, not the Son on the earth, showed Peter what he saw in Christ himself: a text of astonishing power to drive the church to God as the Revealer of Christ to man! In keeping with this, is Paul's assertion that it pleased God to reveal his Son to him, and this too when Paul was hailed by Christ himself on the way to Damascus.

Into the light of these facts bring all that men are inclined to trust to, as subordinate instrumentalities, and test them. If when He was the preacher, when His was the truth, when His were the adaptations of conveyance, if when "flesh and blood" could have been safely credited with efficiency to convert, the power above alone had the honor of the change, what are *we* specially to lean upon? If there is one scripture in which more clearly than another the distinction between the power and the means is drawn, in which the bestowment of saving grace is more firmly reserved to the Godhead, in which there is more convincingly taught the complete dependence of man on God for the light that reveals Christ to the sinner, it is this, in which the Great Teacher abandons the honor of disclosing himself to the human soul.

Thus much for the denials and affirmations of Scripture.

Turn next to its method of giving prominence to this truth, by stating it boldly at the expense of popularity.

Sometimes we have thought that men are led from this doctrine, because the Spirit does not speak of himself. But it is not wholly owing to this. It never was a popular doctrine. In one memorable controversy between Christ and the Jews, the effect of declaring it, was the abandonment of Christ by many who walked with him. At another time he was cast out of the synagogue for declaring it. At another, his hearers took up stones to stone him. Taught at such an expense to souls, does not the great Teacher show how highly he regards dependence on God for results?

But, there is another method by which the Bible presses this truth upon our notice, and that is by representing that the richest expe-

riences in the work of conversion result from recognizing this necessity, and exercising dependence on the Spirit to meet it. And what else can we expect, after the way in which Christ dismissed the church to her work. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth, Go ye therefore and teach all nations. Without me ye can do nothing." And Paul says, 'I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me. When I am weak, as a Christian laborer, then am I strong.' "His divine power," writes Peter, "hath given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness." Well might Peter thus write, in his old age, when of him it stands written, "While Peter spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." And how full of this Holy One the Scriptures are that relate to the Pentecostal revival, every reader of the Acts knows. Christ said, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Conversion did not begin till the Spirit came. They had the facts, the faith, the promise, the prayers, but when the Spirit fell, conversion began, and not till then. And from then till now, where has the work of turning men to God been enjoyed without his presence and power?

Certainly the richest experience of the ministry is when as holy men they speak moved by him. Then it is that the servant of God does not so frequently ascend as descend into his pulpit, coming before the people, like the Lawgiver of old, with a share of the excellent glory. And so it is with the church. It is when she has an impulse over and above the means employed, that she goes forth conquering and to conquer. Her heart and hands are full. She has gone beyond the means of grace: she has the grace itself. "Like as the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." She understands why that was written. Her aspiration is met in the gift received for her by her ascended Lord—even God to dwell with men—even the Spirit of Truth who convinces the world of sin, and is a Shekinah in that living temple—a believer's heart.

ESSAY.

BY REV. HENRY M. PARSONS, OF SPRINGFIELD.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DISTINCTNESS IN THE EXHIBITION OF BIBLICAL DOCTRINE.

It is not without design that the instruction divinely given to a minister in the New Testament, declares that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for *doctrine*." The fundamental principles of Christianity, as revealed in the Bible, are comprised in this term. The stress which is laid on this form of truth in the revelation, comports with its importance in the structure of the spiritual temple. And this importance is no less manifest in these later days—of which we sometimes think the Holy Spirit spake—when he said "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers—having itching ears," (or as the original also reads—"procuring a pleasurable excitement for the hearing,") "and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

God declares to us, that he is engaged in rearing an edifice for the praise of his grace, out of the ruins of the first creation. For this purpose a foundation has been laid. This foundation is "of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. In whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." And to believers it is said, as a principle on which they would be called and added to the church during this dispensation, "In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Thus the object of truth revealed to us, in the form of doctrines, is plain. It is the gracious food by which the church of God is to be sanctified, and prepared as His residence and habitation in the world. It is adapted for this use. As in natural life, a knowledge of the principles which are used in any trade or profession, is necessary to right practice and success; so the believer must know by faith the gospel doctrines, which nourish his inward life, and enable him with fidelity to represent Christ before men. To bring this subject before you for discussion, I shall *first* define

what I understand by *distinctness* in presenting Biblical doctrines; and then *consider some important results* to be gained by it.

In general, *distinctness* of expression is attained, when what is uttered conveys to the hearer the intended meaning. In preaching the Word, the great object is, to convey to the hearers the ideas of God revealed in the Bible; and when doctrines are preached, to impress their divine sense on the heart. We assume the requisite qualifications of mind and heart in the preacher, when we inquire,

First, *What* is a distinct presentation of Biblical doctrines?

We answer, (1.) This includes *clearness of scriptural statement.* Paul was a great preacher, and his hearers at Corinth understood what he meant. He declares that the revealed things of God were the burden of his preaching. "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." Under the high culture of our colleges and seminaries, there is danger that philosophy, and rhetoric, and logic, will displace the words of the Holy Ghost in our pulpits. Good men are in danger of this error, from the natural conviction that the intellectual process is the chief way of receiving divine truths. The church is suffering already from this mistake. The New England metaphysics has made sad inroads on good old New England Theology. Explanations of the *doctrines* of sin and redemption, to suit the fastidious pride of human intellects, are not the scriptural statements of these truths, and when the very words of the Holy Ghost on these subjects, are parried, or explained away, by the adroit quibbles of philosophy, falsely so called—the power of divine truth is lost, and the bewildering glare of human theories is set up, to delude and destroy souls.

It is sometimes urged by those who are ensnared in the meshes of human speculations, and who still profess to subscribe to the truth as it is in Jesus, that they have *one* philosophy of explanation, and that those who insist on the plain meaning of the very words of Scripture have *another.* This is claimed as all the difference, by these philosophers, while they avow as strict a faith in the Word as any, and subscribe the strongest creeds that can be made. But this subterfuge cannot conceal the fact that they discard the scriptural statement, unless explained so as to satisfy the human reason unsanctified, and thus destroy its value as an instrument of the Holy Ghost. And because the sword of the Spirit is so often sheathed in the speculations of vain philosophy or in the garlands of rhetoric, its edge is blunted, and the blow falls powerless on the hard and stony heart. The doctrines of the Bible in the words of the Bible—explained only by the ordinary import and understanding of our language—are the appoint-

ed instruments in our hands for reaching the conscience, and affecting the minds and the hearts of lost sinners.

(2.) *Fullness of scriptural meaning*, is essential to *distinctness* in doctrinal preaching. It is often the case that the sense of a passage is obtained best, by comparison with other and kindred parts of the Bible. This brings out the whole mind of the Spirit, and not only produces a correct exhibition of the doctrine, but in the contact with the Word, the mind catches a glow from the Spirit, giving a peculiar unction, and adding a force often in expression and utterance, that aids the thought of the hearer. In this method the apparent contradictions of truth, which annoy some minds, are harmonized; and under the full light of revelation the hearer is led to search for himself the sacred oracles, and become experimentally acquainted with Christ. It was in this way the Bereans became convinced of the truth. For when Paul preached Christ to them, they searched the Scriptures, to see if the things spoken to them were so. And we have to fear, my brethren, lest the common habit of gauging the pulpit by some human standard of truth or imagination, has arisen from a partial abandonment of the *Word itself*, as the staple material of our sermons.

(3.) Biblical doctrines must be *presented in due proportions*, to be distinctly apprehended. When truths comparatively unessential to the salvation and sanctification of the soul, are the chief attraction of the pulpit, there will inevitably follow a religious indifference and apathy in the hearers. So when a doctrine is distorted by perversion, or undue prominence, leaving an unscriptural impression, as much harm is often done as by denying the truth. Thus to insist on the life of Christ as the chief truth of the incarnation, and maintain that the atonement is presented, when the *death* of Christ is omitted,—or to represent his death as the mere exhibition of the Father's love, and only an attraction to the sinner, instead of the necessary expiation of sins, and the satisfaction of justice, so that God is reconciled to the sinner,—is to pervert the Word of God, and by this fatal omission and distortion, wantonly to delude and destroy the souls of sinners. The same is true of the doctrine of sin. The superficial view so often taught, witholds a vital part of scriptural teaching concerning depravity, and is fast corrupting and undermining the faith of many. So the mere negative preaching, which urges duties by human and earthly motives alone, and aims at little more than a well-ordered morality, is most disastrous upon the public conscience, because leaving out of sight the chief doctrines of grace, and ignoring their necessity as the only foundation of true piety.

The Word of God is our only guide, as to the frequency and prominence to be used in preaching its doctrines. The truths of sin, condemnation, and death; of righteousness, justification, and life, which circle around the cross; the Godhead revealed in Christ, his resurrection and offices; the Holy Spirit and his functions; faith and repentance, the great gospel condition and evidence; the cardinal Christian virtues; the Church in its constitution, sacraments, and mission;—these are the great and leading truths given to us in the Word. We can only follow the method and the example of Christ and his apostles, in declaring them to others. The nearer we approach the examples we have, the more blessed the results that will bear witness to the truth.

(4.) Distinct presentation of biblical doctrines is not attained until the *relations of truths are traced and preserved.* The Bible is systematic. Despite the outcry of some against creeds, there is in the divine Word a relation of truths to a great and definite centre, which if not preserved, will inevitably produce a one-sided and unbalanced Christianity. A great and living truth is found in every part of the Word, the doctrine of Christ, including his person and his work. The employment of every person, of every form of speech known to man, of every art of illustration, of every fact and life in the sacred oracles, is, to set forth this wonderful mystery to lost men, for the revelation of the true God and their return to him. To this centre all other truths are related in nearer or remote connection, according to their value in the divine economy. This relation it is our work, who preach, to discern, to trace, and to preserve, in the presentation of doctrines. Distinctness of impression is not secured until the exact position of revealed doctrines in the Christian system is declared to the hearer, or the student of the Bible; and this is not done until their true relation to Christ, the end of all search, and the sum of all knowledge is defined and declared. When this is done, the biblical doctrine is distinctly exhibited, and in accordance with this principle, it will be found that a few great truths concerning Christ, the Godhead, the character and recovery of lost sinners, are the great staples of preaching, adapted under the Spirit of God, to reach and save sinners, and sanctify saints. No one can be at a loss for material, because in their revealed details they are exhaustless; and in this fullness they are commanded to be preached.

(5.) The distinct presentation of scriptural doctrine is not completed, *till its direction and end in practical effort is shown and felt.* In the Bible, the divorce of doctrine and practice, so common in our day, is never found. The object of doctrines is to produce right conduct. These divine principles must underlie all true performance of

duty. There is life and power in the truth. So that really a doctrine cannot be rightly preached, without enforcing the duty it involves, nor a precept rightly declared, without implying the doctrine upon which it is founded. This is the order of the Epistles. They begin with the assertion of Divine doctrines for our faith, and end with the obligation to all the practical duties of life, springing from the principles laid down, and operating as motives to induce obedience.

Perhaps I have been too minute in definition, to suit the purposes of this discussion, but my apology, if any is needed, must be the painful evidence of history, that, whenever error has come in upon the church, it has begun in the pulpit, by using an evangelical term, without clearly defining the doctrine the Scriptures express by that term.

Let us now briefly, in the second place, consider some important results to be gained by such *distinctness in exhibiting scriptural doctrines.*

(1.) A return of the church to the Word of God as the only rule of faith and practice. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit." The tree must be made good before the fruit can be good. A return to a more biblical method of preaching—one that shall enlist and attract the personal attention of the hearer to the search of the Bible—will speedily produce a reaction from the superficial and worldly style of piety now prevalent. It is not true, as many suppose, that a rigid adherence to the letter of the Word of God will drive sinners from the sanctuary, and weary saints. No minister can study the Word of God to bring out its fundamental truths, with the right culture of prayer and faith, without so increasing in earnestness and animation, that the common people will hear him gladly. And no ministry of this kind can be long exercised in any church, without the effect of sanctifying the people of God by his truth. This new life of a church, will report itself to the world. Instead of living on frames of mind and duties, the professors of religion will be mighty in the Scriptures, and go every where preaching the Word by consistent, holy lives, and improving every opportunity of life to lead others to Christ. This must be the root of all Christian activity—to have the life of the soul hid with Christ in God. And the soul will be filled with desires for heavenly things, and the mind enlightened and purified by this constant and faithful use of the revealed Word.

(2.) Another result will be the permanence and consistency of *moral reforms.* As at present managed, these great objects of Christian philanthropy and zeal are subjected to the fluctuations of human caprice and passion. No reform is really worth anything which does not find

its root in regeneration. And the church, filled with the breath and life of the Holy Spirit, is the only true guardian of public morals.

(3.) Another important result will be the effect on Home Evangelization. This subject has received careful attention for many years. Measures enough have been inaugurated already, to bring all our populations under gospel influences, if measures would do it. But these are powerless for efficient good, unless in the hands of a church baptized by the Holy Ghost, through the diligent and intelligent study and application of Christian doctrines. This is the real thing needed by all our churches—such an impulse from their own prayerful search of the Scriptures, and building on the vital doctrines of the cross, that they cannot sit still and see sinners around them going to eternal death, without an effort to save them.

The faithful, pungent preaching of the great fundamental truths of the Bible, ever has produced an holy church and faithful disciples in the vineyard of the Lord. It will be so again. We are in a crisis, when many a heart is praying for the return of a pure, and powerful, and sacrificial gospel to the pulpit. God is the hearer of prayer. The ministry are being baptized with the spirit of primitive Christianity. The churches are awaking to the fact that in many cases they have been starved, by this departure from the spirit and substance of the Bible. And they will seek from the Great Head a return of His Spirit of wisdom and knowledge and humility and faith to rest on their teachers. Out of the very sacrifices we are making under the chastising hand of God—from the very trials of bitterness and death, to which many in our churches have been called—will come forth the resurrection of Christian life, the return of that devoted and loving evangelism, which, not satisfied with the ingathering of the home harvest, will go forth with renewed zeal and fresh courage, to garner the world for Christ, and introduce His kingdom and reign of glory throughout the entire earth.

ESSAY.

BY REV. LEWIS SABIN, D. D., TEMPLETON.

THE CLAIMS AND DUTIES OF THE SABBATH AS A DAY OF REST.

It is a maxim of Christianity that "The Sabbath was made for man." The Christian Sabbath is the Lord's day. Man himself was made for the service and glory of God, and the Sabbath for man. The Sabbath carries with it the divine benediction and sanctification, as a season set apart for man's religious use in the promotion of the chief end of his existence.

1. We begin this discussion by calling attention to the obvious truth, that the first and paramount claim of the Sabbath is, that it should be accepted and employed as a *day of rest*. Its name signifies rest—ceasing from labor. The historical account of its origin at the creation informs us, that the Almighty, who is never weary, "rested on the seventh day from all the work which he had made;" and assigns this as the reason for his sanctifying it, and blessing it, as the time appointed for conferring his choicest blessings on the world. It was a rest from the work of creation,—a rest, not of languid torpor, but of cessation and of satisfaction. He "rested and was refreshed." That divine rest was a pattern, and became a law to man. The institution of the Sabbath descended to the Jews, and took the form of a statute in the first table of the moral law, where its observance as a day of holy rest is very expressly enjoined. "In it thou shalt not do any work." So the prophets expounded the law of the weekly holy day, as requiring the suspension of worldly engagements and recreations;—in it "Thou shalt honor the Lord, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words." So the Jews understood the Fourth Commandment, though in their later history, they put upon it a too rigid and mischievous construction. Nothing can be plainer than the prohibition of secular work on that day, and it has never been revoked.

Our churches do not need argument to prove that the Lord's day is to be rescued from worldly work and amusements. We are agreed in our conviction that the plough must stand, the counting-house and

sale-room and work-shop must be shut, and all ordinary business must be suspended during that holy day. But just here we obtain the first view of the Sabbath, which should engage our attention *anew* in these stirring times. Let us look at it as God blessed it in the beginning and hallowed it for all ages. It is a day of rest. It is divinely separated from other days and set apart from common uses. The toils and temptations of the world are to be shut out. The tumult and distractions of the week must not enter that sacred day. It has its engagements, as we shall see, but those engagements are not about concerns of worldly interest. Its first office is rest, lifting the burden from the toiling world, and giving quiet and leisure for the refreshment of the body, and liberty for the spirit to commune with God and grasp the things that are not seen. The Sabbath then is a day of mercy, having for its first office to relieve the weary limbs, to smooth the brow of care, and to cool the fever of earthly passions. It is a sanctuary, where worldly cares have no right, and where heaven brings its offers of grace for the guilty, help for the despairing, comfort for the sad. It is a garden, which God has walled around to keep out the wild gusts of passion and every ravenous beast, and where they that fear him may gather spices and pluck the fruit of every tree that is good for nourishment or medicine. It is an oasis, where the fainting traveler, as he walks through the heat and dust of life's desert, may come, after six days of toil, and sit down at leisure by a spring that never dries up, and bathe his brow and drink his fill of the refreshing waters, nor leave the green, cool spot without filling every vessel with water to supply his wants on his way till he catches a sight of the palm trees around the next of these springs in the desert.

It behoves Christians, as well as those who are not Christians, to bear in mind that a seventh day rest is a law of nature as well as a command of the Decalogue. The conclusion is abundantly established, by a careful induction of facts, that the human system requires a weekly day of rest. For this purpose the Creator has reserved that day for rest from all ordinary work, except such as is clearly and absolutely necessary to preserve life and health, or to promote the spiritual uses of the Sabbath. It is not for rest from activity.

2. Another principle of Sabbath duty is that *it is to be occupied with such religious employments as are fitted to meet the moral and religious necessities of mankind.* "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." We are to exclude from it our worldly engagements, not that we may leave it an open field for idleness, amusement, or the indulgence of passion and appetite, but that we may have freedom and leisure to hold communion with God, and to devote ourselves to the sacred employments of religion, which lay broad and deep foundations of all duty both towards God and towards man.

The Sabbath ought to be a busy day. Every part of it ought to be occupied with some religious employment which will make the heart better—with some duty which falls in with the design of God in sanctifying the Sabbath. Those who work hard and late on Saturday, because the Sabbath is coming, and they can then sleep, profane the day by such rest. They have no right to overwork their bodies or their minds on Saturday, and then depend on recruiting them on the Sabbath. It is wronging the soul. It is robbing God. It is breaking the Sabbath, in the sight of God, as really as if they were at work.

It should be borne in mind that, while the spiritual end and uses of the Sabbath have been divinely prescribed, and have remained unchanged, the lapse of time, which enlarges the scope of Christian knowledge and sympathy and the means of influence, modifies the form of Sabbath duties. Those duties must change in form with the varying relations of men. The services proper for the Christian Sabbath must differ materially from the Jewish observances of the holy day. The Sabbath duties of intelligent Christians at this day embody forms of well-doing which were unknown to Gentile converts in the first centuries of Christianity, and even to Christians in the last century, before the introduction of Sabbath Schools, and the general diffusion of religious literature among the people. Hence no rigid routine of Sabbath services is to be found in minute scriptural statement, but those services should be held as subject to such modifications and changes as our changing circumstances demand. Else we sink down beneath a bondage of barren forms, and set up again the exploded idea, that man was made for the Sabbath. The Lord of the Sabbath desires of us mercy rather than sacrifice, the heart rather than the form. Our religion exhorts us to "be not children in understanding." We must keep our Sabbaths as *men*, having conscience and also common sense—as men, alive in a living world, and ever aiming, in the services of our holy day, to secure the best preparation and strength for our working day duties—yet as men, owing first of all love and loyalty to God, and therefore bound to employ the Lord's day in the services for which he has appropriated it, and in such order and proportion as will best answer its design. It will be conceded that customs of human origin should not have the authority of law to bar discussion and rule our action.

We are *in danger of encumbering the Sabbath with too many religious services.* It is important that Christians consider anew, what services, in kind and amount, are appropriate and desirable for the Sabbath as a day of rest. Thoughtful Christians, without any thing of irreverence or presumption, are inquiring whether we are not, in various ways, frustrating the design of the Sabbath as a day of holy rest, by

overloading it with public religious services; and whether we are not expending sacred time and energy unwisely, by attempting to do too much on that day. It should not be imputed to a spirit of innovation, if we advocate a change in the present custom of Sabbath services; we are rather asking for "the old paths."

The public services of the Lord's day have been subject to human modifications from time to time, to meet the changes of society and new interests concerned, and, in recent times, these services have been augmented by successive, distinct accretions.

In the early ages of the Christian Church, the services of public worship were conducted with the greatest simplicity. The Christians assembled for the worship of God and their advancement in piety, on the first day of the week. In these public assemblies, the reading of large portions of the holy Scriptures, with brief expositions and animated exhortations to the people, constituted a prominent part of the services. Afterwards they offered prayers, broke bread and sang hymns. This method, established under apostolic supervision, was adapted to an age when copies of the Word of God were rare and costly. It honored the Scriptures, and diffused the knowledge of God's love and power, of his truth and commandments.

Many causes combined to work changes in these simple modes of worship. The simple address became the formal and elaborate sermon. The celebration of the Lord's death became less frequent. And two public services, held in the morning and in the afternoon of the Lord's day, in which sermons were preached, accompanied with reading selections of the Word of God, and exercises of praise and prayer, became the general custom, and has been handed down to us by tradition from our fathers.

During the last half century, the public services of the Sabbath have been increased. The Sabbath school has become an established institution, recognized as highly congenial to the design of the holy day, and owned of God by the seal of his blessing, and has assumed a place between the morning and afternoon services. These services are followed by the monthly concert, the Sabbath school concert, the concert of prayer for the country, or else by a third preaching service, or a meeting for devotional singing, conference and prayer;—making four services, which the Christian people are called upon to attend, instead of two which our conscientious fathers thought to be enough in ordinary circumstances. In addition to these services in our cities and populous villages, mission schools among the abodes of ignorance and vice occupy numbers of earnest men and women in the vacant intervals of the day, as does also sometimes the morning prayer meeting, or measures for promoting religious revival and moral reformation.

Do we not attempt to do too much? No one needs to be reminded, that the quiet of the Puritan Sabbath, which, in its influence upon the English race in England, Scotland and America, has changed entirely and forever the history of these countries, and through them the history of the world, stands in striking contrast to the wearisome and distracting employments of our Sabbaths. Under our present customs, there is a hurrying away from the family to the morning meeting or mission school,—then to church, from church to Sabbath school, from Sabbath school to church again, and from church to the evening service, not to speak of other meetings in behalf of philanthropic or patriotic objects, or specific reforms, which often find a place in a vacant hour of the sacred day. The necessary consequence of this multiplication of public exercises on the Sabbath is that family instruction is neglected; personal and private duties are hurried over; sermons are forgotten, the attendance becomes irregular, and both ministers and people come, jaded and worn, to the close of the day, and retain only a bewildered and dreamy impression of having been whirled through the day's routine.

What changes are needed in order to escape the evils consequent upon the present multiplication of public services on the Sabbath? We shall best approach this question and appreciate the necessity of some modification of those services, if we consider, at this point, what prominence the more private duties of personal and family religion should hold in a due observance of the weekly day of rest, and which are seriously interfered with by the customary number of public services.

1. The personal duties of *meditation*, private *devotion and reading*, demand a portion of the day of holy rest. These duties cannot be crowded out of the day or be slightly passed over, without marring all the other uses of the day, and sending chill and blight over all its sacred employments, which should glow with holy life and joy. A flourishing, healthy piety has its springs in the secret place of the Most High. It is fed and nourished chiefly by devout study of the Word of God on his day, by reflection on our past life, by reviewing the histories of God's love and the wonders of his power, by remembering the love and grace of redemption, by meditation on eternal things, and by secret prayer. It is true, that these are duties of every day. But the brief seasons of devotion, which the Christian rescues from business on the week-days, are not enough to answer his wants. The surges of business and worldly excitements would efface the transient impression and extinguish his good purposes, if the Sabbath did not afford him time and freedom from disturbing business, for calm and deep contemplation, and for bringing his mind into vitalizing contact with eternal truth. Such a use of a portion of the Lord's day tends

to make Christians strong, and steadfast in faith, able to "endure temptation" and ready to every good work. When we come from our Sabbath duties in our closets, let our faces shine with the light borrowed there from God, and our spirits exhale the fragrance of devout gratitude, praise and joy, and we shall go forth to other Sabbath duties to be blessed in them and to be a blessing to others.

Moreover, the profitable hearing of sermons requires time after hearing to be given to *reflection and self-appropriation*. Most hearers are people of undisciplined minds, and have little skill to retain what they hear. They need to recall what they have heard, to reflect upon it, to discuss it in the home circle on Sabbath evening, and so to fasten it in the memory. Few trained thinkers can apprehend and retain the train of thought of a good sermon without recalling it and reflecting upon it soon after listening to it. This after-thought is the inward digestion, which receives and assimilates for use the mental nutriment. One evil, which results from multiplying the Sabbath services, is that most sermons fail of making any lasting impression; they take no hold upon the mind with power to control and influence it, but are soon forgotten—often text, theme, argument and illustration are all forgotten within twenty-four hours. Sermons are absolutely wasted for want of time to recall and suitably digest them.

Some time should be devoted to *religious reading* on the Sabbath. In former days, ministers used to read at the monthly concert long extracts from the missionary journals. But now this intelligence is spread before the people in books and papers, and should be read by them. A volume like "Woman and her Saviour in Persia," or the "Memoir of Mary Lyon," affords illustrations of the grace of God which sermons cannot set forth with their full power of impression. In the multitude of books, papers and periodicals, which are now offered as Sabbath Literature, great care should be used in the selection and admission to the family of proper reading for the Sabbath. The net gathers of every kind; and one needs to be wise to "gather the good into vessels and throw the bad away."

2. The duties of *family religion* must have a prominent place in the day of rest. These duties include family worship and the various modes of religious instruction and training, in order that children and the household may know and keep the way of the Lord. The Sabbath is peculiarly a family institution. "It is the Sabbath of the Lord your God in all your dwellings." It is especially committed to heads of families in trust to see that it is observed by those under their care. It restores the toiling millions to their families. The divine command suspends all worldly business and amusement on the recurrence of that day, and places the head of the family in the bosom of the home circle. He is the priest at that altar. He is appointed of God

to minister to that circle religious instruction and Christian nurture. The family institution, in which he presides, takes rank, in God's economy, before the church, and much more before the Sabbath School. And the Sabbath, with its suspension of business and its freedom from worldly distractions, with its very stillness and felt sacredness, is his choice and needed time for effort and influence with his precious charge. No apportionment of the hours of the day is wise which does not set apart an adequate portion for this family exercise.

The Sabbath in the family should not be a day of tasks merely and a routine of Sabbath acts. It should be rather a day of happy influence and training, calculated to enkindle a hearty love for the spiritual uses of the day. The old practice of gathering the children on Sabbath afternoon or evening to recite hymns, and the "Assembly's Shorter Catechism," or select passages of Scripture, was excellent and worthy of being perpetuated in Christian families. The mechanical memorizing of the lessons should be the children's week-day work. But the rehearsal and illustration of the great truths of religion in the family circle is one of the best methods of Sabbath instruction and entertainment. It instills into the minds of children reverence for the day as an institution of God. It makes the day cheerful, sociable, happy. Who, that is blessed with recollections of a childhood passed in a Christian home, where the family were gathered on the Sabbath evening for religious instruction, will set any of his dear early memories above such as cluster around those Sabbath lessons at home, which were explained and enforced by the unquestioned piety and love that presided in that quiet scene? Besides the formal lessons recited by children at home on the Sabbath, parents should win their love to the Sabbath by cheerful, simple, religious *conversation*. Every Christian parent has the material for this within his reach, in the simple, touching narratives of the Bible—in Christian biography—in the history of the church and her martyrs—in God's dealings with the family when he took to heaven the little brother or sister or the sainted grandparent. Talk of these things. It does not require much learning. It has wonderful power over young minds. The impression is enduring and blessed. It invests those early Sabbaths with delightful and hallowed associations. How many of the wisest and most useful men, if they should describe the influences which moulded and enlisted them to a life of piety and beneficence, would point us to the influence of Sabbath piety in that home, where their childhood drank in Bible stories at the knees of a Christian mother.

And further, we must connect with the proper observance of the Sabbath at home, attention to the preparation of the children's lessons for the Sabbath School. The Sabbath School cannot safely be regarded

by parents as relieving them of the necessity of giving religious instruction to their children. If it is wisely conducted, it renders them important aid in making the Sabbath interesting to their children, and in furnishing their minds with Christian truth. But it is only *an auxiliary*. The responsibility rests with parents to superintend and direct the training of their children in the Sabbath School, and see that they go with proper preparation.

The duties of household Sabbath piety are vitally important to the church. The children of the kingdom must be gathered in; they are heirs of the promises. If they are left to wander from the fold, those outside will soon begin to distrust our sincerity, and mock our appeals. It should be remembered that both God's covenant and the experience of Christian parents, who have faithfully discharged their parental duties, and especially Sabbath duties to their children, afford parents the amplest encouragement to expect success. We know that depravity is wrapped up in the heart of a child, and the human heart is a stronghold of evil. But we know that God's grace is stronger. It must be granted that Christian parents often fail of seeing their efforts for the conversion of their children successful. But their efforts in many cases are manifestly misdirected and inconsistent. Generally they have failed to reach the susceptible feelings of their children with the influences of a holy, cheerful Christian Sabbath. And it may fairly be supposed, that not seldom the failures of Christian parents to see their children walking in the ways of piety, are to be attributed to the fact, that the Sabbath of those parents has been suffered to be too much withdrawn from the sacred claims of their own households. It is a great sacrifice, which no public duties can justify.

But we are met with the question, How shall we *find time* for these Sabbath duties of private devotion and family religion within the limits of the day? It is a fair question. The day of holy rest is commonly so occupied with public services, that it is almost impossible to find the time that is needed for the prime duties of the closet and the family. We take the case of an earnest Christian man, in one of our populous centres, who is a reliable helper of his pastor, and zealous in every Christian enterprise. He must attend two church services and the Sabbath School. These, together with the customary evening meeting, and perhaps a mission Sabbath School, will consume nearly all his time except what is required for ordinary domestic duties and for going to and returning from the places of meeting. He really has no time for calm meditation and recalling the preaching, and no time for any thing more than a hurried gathering of the family and very inadequate religious instruction to his children. Nor is this all. His physical and mental energies are exhausted; his religious sensibilities are worn out; and wearied nature, after giving attention to three services,

clamors for either inaction or sleep during the interval that should be devoted to systematic home instruction in the Bible or Catechism on the Sabbath.

Now it appears to be evident that some *modifications* should be made in the public services which are commonly held on the Sabbath. The change cannot be wisely made abruptly and suddenly. Judicious and good men of late have advocated *a substitution of the Sabbath School in place of the usual afternoon preaching service.* And experiments in this direction have been made, but not to such an extent as to test and settle all the questions connected with the subject. The idea, in recommending this modification in the customary services of the sanctuary, is that the morning services should continue, as heretofore, only the sermon should receive the strength and prayerful thought which ministers have ordinarily been obliged to spread out into two sermons,—that the afternoon sermon be discontinued, and instead of the ordinary sermon, a Bible service be held, in which the pastor shall have his appropriate place in supervision and teaching, and in which the congregation, of all ages and grades of religious knowledge, shall be organized into classes for instruction in the Word of God, thus embodying the adults in Bible classes for appropriate scriptural study, and the young also for instruction, as heretofore, in the Sabbath school,—and that the evening be appropriated to the monthly concert and prayer meetings; or, in the sparsely settled places, to neighborhood prayer meetings under the direction of competent members of the church, and the pastor holding a Sabbath evening service in different parts of his parish in town.

In dropping one of the services connected with preaching, whether forenoon or afternoon, it is suggested that the time should be occupied with the Sabbath school *so modified* as to be at the same time an exercise of public worship, and a suitable biblical service for all classes in the congregation. It should be a *Bible service.* In this service, the pastor would not only be present and lend his aid in supervision and counsel, but labor to promote the ends of the service in more direct ways, as by occasional addresses to the school, by short sermons to the young, by occasional written expository sermons, or passages assigned as lessons for older classes, and by engaging in the general devotional exercises.

If the same number of public services be continued as heretofore, the modification of having one expository sermon on the Sabbath would diversify the exercises, and afford some relief from the distraction and weariness that attend the practice of having two sermons of the essay kind.

The plan of substituting a modified form of the Sabbath school in the place of one of the customary services for preaching on the Sab-

bath is good as a theory, and promises good practical results. No doubt it is practicable. It is not desirable that it should be adopted by a sudden, general change of old customs. One denomination could not well act alone in the matter. The change is one of those things towards which thoughtful Christians will work by discussion and gradual approaches.

We believe that the adoption of a modification of the Sabbath services is urged by the capabilities of ministers, few of whom will feel that, with all the occasional drafts upon their time, they can prepare more than one well-digested and profitable written discourse each week. But I pass this point.

The change is believed to be urged also by the best interests of the people, as tending to promote a more regular attendance upon the Sabbath services, and to secure better habits of attention to preaching, and greater susceptibility to religious impression and edification.

It is worthy of consideration, also, that the Bible service, proposed for one part of the Sabbath, conforms as nearly as practicable for us, to the methods of the apostles and early Christian teachers, who in their preaching, often simply opened and expounded the Scriptures,—reasoned out of the Scriptures, and so taught the people. It carries a blessing to the church by calling its members into more active service in the use of their gifts and attainments. It admits as much prominence to the devotional exercises, prayer and singing, as is commonly given to them in the afternoon service as connected with a formal sermon. The devotional exercises need to be made more prominent than heretofore in our public worship. These acts of loving and delighted worship have a tendency to exalt God, and to exercise and cultivate the religious affections. The Bible service should be particularly adapted to the young, and be arranged for all ages and descriptions of the people.

While the congregation are thus engaged in their classes, it may happen that some of the earnest men and women can at the same time be spared and be detached to go to some mission school, and become the vehicles of the gospel, and salvation to many children of infidels and Sabbath haters, who but for them would have been trained to dishonor the Sabbath and tread the way to destruction.

The experiment of this modification of our public Sabbath services has as yet been but partially tried; but so far as it has been tried, it has justified the expectations of its judicious advocates. As a theory, the proposed plan stands strong in reason and argument. It now calls for consideration and candid discussion. It cannot be reduced to general practice in our churches by a sudden change. The majority of our churches are averse to innovation. They look with distrust upon new usages and abrupt departures from beaten ways. This is

not to be blamed. They need to be convinced that the theory will promote the true ends of the Sabbath, before they approve it by its adoption. They need to talk about it, and read about it, till they can discover its various bearings, and they will then be ready to move and keep abreast with the demands of the times.

One thing which favors the modification of our Sabbath public services is the cramped and imperfect working of our Sabbath Schools under the prevailing practice. In most of our country churches, Sabbath Schools are crippled for want of time. And. in city and country, they are too much isolated from the beating heart and life of the church, and regarded as children's schools. We should remember that Christians are *disciples*—and should be learners as long as they live. In a Bible service, which should embrace the congregation, the classes need not be very many. Some of them might embrace large numbers. They might pursue very different researches. While some were engaged upon the first principles of revealed religion, other Bible classes, advanced in Christian knowledge, might be engaged in the study of the deeper truths of God's word, which stretch away like oceans, all unexplored before them. Their presence and example would be a law and inspiration to the young. This method would bring the church into vital sympathy and co-operation with the Sabbath School, and eminently befit the Sabbath as a day of rest. The church must take care of her children. They are to be trained up for a great trust. They must, by faithful and prayerful instruction, be prepared for its duties. To withdraw attention from the religious nurture of the children is criminal neglect, and no claims of personal interest or public duty are entitled to exact it. They are to be led to Christ. If the church, through neglect or misdirected effort, fails to gather, under the power of converting grace, the lambs of the fold, who bear the mark of consecration to the Good Shepherd, her efforts to bring in those who are outside of the fold will not be likely to be blessed with much success. But if the church secures the conversion of her children, and leads them to God in the light of his Sabbaths, her light will shine abroad, and her conquests extend, and her rest shall be glorious.

DISTRICT CONFERENCES.

WITH THEIR OFFICERS, TIMES OF MEETING, AND CHURCHES CONNECTED WITH THEM.

I. Andover. Organized June 8, 1859.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Andover, South church,	Charles Smith.
" Theol. Sem. church,	*Faculty.*
" West church,	James H. Merrill.
" Free Christian church,	Stephen C. Leonard, *s. s.*
" Ballardvale, Un. ch.	Henry S. Greene.
Chelmsford, N., Second church,	Benjamin F. Clark.
Dracut, First Evan. church,	Lyman S. Watts, *s. s.*
" West church,	Perrin B. Fisk.
" Central Orth. church,	George Pierce, Jr.
Lawrence, Lawrence-st. church,	Caleb E. Fisher.
" Central church,	Christopher M. Cordley.
Lowell, First church,	George N. Webber.
" Appleton-street church,	J. Eames Rankin.
" John-street church,	Joseph W. Backus.
" Kirk-street church,	Amos Blanchard, D. D.
" High-street church,	Owen Street.
Methuen, First church,	Edward H. Greeley.
North Andover, Evan. church,	L. Henry Cobb.
Tewksbury, Cong. church,	Richard Tolman.

Officer:—Rev. L. Henry Cobb, North Andover, *Secretary*.
Conference meets on the Second Wednesday in June.

II. Barnstable. Organized October 28, 1828.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Barnstable, West,	Henry A. Goodhue.
" Cotuit,	*Vacant.*
" Centreville,	*Vacant.*
" Hyannis,	Charles Morgridge.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Chatham,	Alexander C. Childs, *s. s.*
Dennis, South,	A. M. Stone, *s. s.*
Falmouth, First,	James P. Kimball.
" East,	Edwin Seabury, *s. s.*
" North,	Levi Wheaton, *s. s.*
" Waquoit,	David Brigham, *s. s.*
Harwich,	Joseph R. Munsell, *s. s.*
" Port, Pilgrim church,	*Vacant.*
Nantucket,	Samuel D. Hosmer, *s. s.*
Orleans,	*Vacant.*
Provincetown,	Osborne Myrick.
Sandwich,	*Vacant.*
Truro, First church,	Edward W. Noble.
" North,	Philander Bates, *s. s.*
Wellfleet, First church,	George F. Walker.
" South, Second church,	William E. Caldwell, *s. s.*
Yarmouth, First church,	Joseph B. Clark.
" West, Second church,	Robert Samuel, *s. s.*

Officer :—Rev. Joseph B. Clark, Yarmouth, *Scribe.*

Conference meets on the Tuesday next preceding the full of the moon, in June and December.

III. Berkshire South. Organized September 4, 1860.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Egremont, South,	Timothy A. Hazen, *s. s.*
Great Barrington,	T. T. Stratton.
" Housatonic,	Josiah Brewer, *s. s.*
Lee,	Nahum Gale, D. D.
Lenox,	Reuben S. Kendall.
Monterey,	*Vacant.*
New Marlborough, First church,	Charles C. C. Painter,
" Southfield,	Irem W. Smith.
Otis,	Thomas A. Hall, *s. s.*
Sheffield,	D. D. Shaler.
Stockbridge,	Nathaniel H. Eggleston.
" Curtisville,	*Vacant.*
West Stockbridge,	Edward J. Giddings, *s. s.*
" Centre.	Lewis Pennell.

Officers :—Rev. Nahum Gale, D. D., Lee, *Moderator;* Rev. Nathaniel H. Eggleston, Stockbridge, *Scribe;* Rev. Lewis Pennell, Henry G. Rudd, Frederick H. Jones, *Executive Committee.*

Conference meets annually, on the Second Wednesday in November, and monthly during the autumn and winter.

IV. Brookfield Associational. Organized June 10, 1838.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Barre, Evan. Cong. church,	David Peck.
Brimfield, First Cong. church,	Charles M. Hyde.
Brookfield, Evan. Cong. church,	Joshua Coit.
Charlton, Calv. Cong. church,	John Haven.
Dana, Cong. church,	*Vacant.*
Dudley, Cong. church,	Henry Pratt.
Hardwick, Ortho. Cong. church,	Martyn Tupper.
Holland, Cong. church,	Ogden Hall, *s. s.*
New Braintree, Cong. church,	John H. Gurney.
North Brookfield, First Cong. ch.	Christopher Cushing.
" Union Con. ch.	Luther Keene.
Oakham, Evan. Cong. church,	Francis N. Peloubet.
Southbridge, Cong. church,	Eber Carpenter.
Spencer, Cong. church,	James Cruickshanks.
Sturbridge, Cong. church,	Marshall B. Angier.
Ware, First church,	William C. Tuttle.
" East Cong. church,	Ariel E. P. Perkins.
Warren, Cong. church,	Edwin L. Jaggar.
West Brookfield, Cong. church,	Samuel Dunham, *s. s.*

Officer:—Rev. Joshua Coit, Brookfield, *Scribe.*

Conference meets on the Second Tuesday in June.

V. Essex North. Organized April 30, 1828.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Amesbury, West,	Leander Thompson,
" Mills,	*Vacant.*
" and Salisbury,	N. G. Goodhue, *s. s.*
Bradford,	James T. McCollom.
Georgetown,	Charles Beecher.
Groveland,	*Vacant.*
Haverhill, West,	Asa Farwell.
" East,	Abraham Burnham.
" Centre,	Theodore T. Munger.
" North church,	Raymond H. Seeley, D. D.
Ipswich, First church,	Robert Southgate.
" Linebrook,	Ezekiel Dow.
Newbury, First church,	Leonard Withington, D. D. John R. Thurston.
" Byfield church,	*Vacant.*
Newburyport, North church,	E. Cornelius Hooker.
" Fourth church,	Randolph Campbell.
" Belleville,	Daniel T. Fiske, D. D.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Newburyport, Whitefield church,	Samuel J. Spalding, D. D.
Rowley,	John Pike.
Salisbury, Hill,	Benjamin Sawyer, *s. s.*
West Newbury, First church,	Charles D. Herbert.
" Second church,	Davis Foster.

Also, the First and Second Presbyterian churches in Newburyport.

OFFICERS:—Rev. John R. Thurston, Newbury, *Scribe;* Rev. Daniel T. Fiske, D. D., Newburyport, *Assistant Scribe;* Dea. William Thurston, *Auditor.*

CONFERENCE MEETS on the Second Tuesday of October.

VI. ESSEX SOUTH. Organized May 8, 1827.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Beverly, Dane-street church,	Joseph Abbott, D. D.*
" Washington-st. church,	Alonzo B. Rich.
" North, Fourth church,	Eli W. Harrington.
Danvers, Maple-street church,	*Vacant.*
Essex, First church,	James M. Bacon.
Gloucester, Harbor,	Isaiah C. Thacher.
" Lanesville,	Thomas Morong.
" West,	Samuel Cole, *s. s.*
Hamilton,	S. Franklin French.
Ipswich, South,	Daniel Fitz, D. D.
Lynnfield Centre,	M. Bradford Boardman.
Manchester, Orthodox church,	Edward P. Tenney, *s. s.*
" *The* Ortho. church,	Francis V. Tenney.
Marblehead, Third church,	Timothy D. P. Stone.
Middleton,	*Vacant.*
Rockport, First church,	William H. Dunning.
" Second church,	Luther H. Angier. (Pastor elect.)
Salem, Howard-street church,	Charles C. Beaman, *s. s.*
" Third church,	Brown Emerson, D. D. Edward S. Atwood.
South Danvers, South church,	William M. Barber.

OFFICER:—William M. Barber, South Danvers, *Clerk.*

CONFERENCE MEETS on Second Wednesday of June and October.

VII. FRANKLIN. Organized Oct. 10, 1843.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Ashfield, First church,	Edward C. Ewing.
" Second church,	Theodore Jarvis Clark.

* Not a member of Conference.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Bernardston, Orth. Cong. church,	Andrew B. Foster, *s. s.*
Buckland,	Charles Lord.
Charlemont, First church,	John S. Whitman, *s. s.*
" East,	Aaron Foster.
Coleraine,	Isaac B. Smith, *s. s.*
Conway,	Elijah Cutler.
Deerfield, Ortho. Cong. church,	Robert Crawford, D. D.
" South, First church,	Perkins K. Clark.
" Monument church,	David A. Strong.
Erving, Evan. Cong. church,	Freeman A. Merrill, *s. s.*
Gill,	Abijah Stowell, *s. s.*
Greenfield, First church,	Azar Chandler, D. D. Daniel H. Rogan.
" Second church,	Artemas Dean.
Hawley, East,	Henry Seymour.
" West,	*Vacant.*
Heath,	*Vacant.*
Montague, First Cong. church,	Francis B. Perkins.
Northfield, Trin. Cong. church,	Isaac S. Perry, *s. s.*
Orange, Cen. Evan. Cong. church,	Daniel Phillips, *s. s.*
Shelburne, First church,	Richard S. Billings.
" Falls,	*Vacant.*
Shutesbury, Ortho. Cong. church,	*Vacant.*
Sunderland,	*Vacant.*
Warwick, Trin. Cong. church,	Edmund H. Blanchard.

Officer:—Rev. David A. Strong, Deerfield, *Scribe.*

Conference meets on the Tuesday preceding the Third Wednesday in September.

VIII. Hampden. (No report obtained.)

IX. Hampshire, East. Organized . . . .

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Amherst, First church,	Henry L. Hubbell.
" Second church,	*Vacant.*
" South church,	Walter Barton.
" College church,	William A. Stearns, D. D.
" North,	*Vacant.*
Belchertown,	Henry B. Blake.
Enfield,	John A. Seymour.
Granby,	Henry S. Kelsey.
Greenwich,	Edward P. Blodgett.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Hadley, First church,	Rowland Ayres.
" Second church,	Warren H. Beaman.
Hatfield,	John M. Greene.
Leverett,	John Hartwell.
Pelham,	William H. Dowden.
Prescott,	David Bancroft.
South Hadley, First church,	Hiram Mead.
" Falls,	Samuel J. M. Merwin.
Whately,	John W. Lane.

OFFICERS:—Rev. Rowland Ayers, Hadley, *Moderator;* Rev. Walter Barton, Amherst, *Scribe;* Dea. S. Sweetser, Amherst, *Registrar.*

CONFERENCE MEETS on the Tuesdays next after the First Sabbath in May, and Second Sabbath in November.

X. MENDON. Organized April 27, 1858.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Foxboro', Ortho. Cong. church,	Noadiah S. Dickinson.
Franklin,	Samuel Hunt.
" South, Un. Cong. church,	Sumner Clark, *s. s.*
Mansfield, Ortho. Cong. church,	Jacob Ide, Jr.
Medfield, Second Cong. church,	Andrew Bigelow.
Medway, East, First church,	Jacob Roberts.
" West, Second church,	Jacob Ide, D. D.
" Village church,	David Sanford.
Milford, First Cong. church,	Alfred A. Ellsworth.
Walpole, Ortho. Cong. church,	Edward G. Thurber.
Wrentham, Orig. Cong. church,	Charles L. Mills,
" North, Union church,	John E. Corey, *s. s.*

CONFERENCE MEETS in April and October.

XI. MIDDLESEX SOUTH. Organized . . . .

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Assabet,	Adin H. Fletcher, *s. s.*
Ashland,	Albert H. Currier.
Concord,	Edward S. Potter, *s. s.*
Dover,	Thomas S. Norton.
Framingham,	John Knox McLean.
" Saxonville,	George E. Hill.
Grantville,	*Vacant.*
Holliston,	Joshua T. Tucker.
Hopkinton,	John C. Webster.
Lincoln,	Henry J. Richardson.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Marlboro',	George N. Anthony.
Natick,	Charles M. Tyler.
" South,	Elnathan E. Strong.
Sherborn,	Edmund Dowse.
Southboro',	*Vacant.*
Sudbury,	Erastus Dickinson.
Wayland,	Henry Bullard.
Wellesley,	*Vacant.*

OFFICER :—Rev. Elnathan E. Strong, South Natick, *Scribe.*

CONFERENCE MEETS on the Last Tuesday in April and the Third Tuesday in October.

XII. MIDDLESEX UNION. Organized May 8, 1833.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Acton,	George W. Coleman.
Ashby,	*Vacant.*
Boxboro',	George N. Marden.
Dunstable,	William C. Jackson.
Fitchburg,	Alfred Emerson.
Groton,	*Vacant.*
" South,	David M. Bean, *s. s.*
Harvard,	John Dodge.
Lancaster,	Amos E. Lawrence.
Leominster,	Horace Parker, *s. s.*
Littleton.	Elihu Loomis, *s. s.*
Lunenburg,	William A. Mandell.
Pepperell,	Edward P. Smith.
Shirley,	Albert I. Dutton.
Townsend,	John C. Hutchinson, *s. s.*
Westford,	Edwin R. Hodgman, *s. s.*

OFFICER :—Rev. George N. Marden, West Acton, *Secretary.*

CONFERENCE MEETS in October.

XIII. NORFOLK. Organized June 14, 1827.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Abington, First church,	Frederic R. Abbe.
" Second church,	Henry L. Edwards.
" Third church,	Horace D. Walker.
" Fourth church,	*Vacant.*
Braintree, The South church,	Lucius R. Eastman, Jr.
Bridgewater, First Trin. church,	Ebenezer Douglass.
Canton, Evan. Cong. church,	Ezra Haskell.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Cohasset, Second Cong. church,	Frederic A. Reed.
" Evan. Un. church in Beechwood,	Cyrus Stone, *s. s.*
Dorchester, Second church,	James H. Means.
" The Village church,	A. Judson Rich.
" Church in Hyde Park,	*Vacant.*
East Bridgewater, Un. church of East & West Bridgewater,	Nathaniel H. Broughton.
" Trin. church,	*No public services.*
Easton, Cong. church,	Luther Sheldon, D. D. Charles E. Lord.
Hingham, Evan. church,	Henry W. Parker, *s. s.*
Milton, First church,	Albert K. Teele.
" Second Evan. Cong. ch.	*No public services.*
North Bridgewater, First church,	Edward L. Clark.
" South Cong. ch.	Charles W. Wood.
" Porter Ev. ch.	Samuel H. Lee.
Quincy, Evan. Cong. church,	Edward P. Thwing.
Randolph, First church,	*Vacant.*
" Second church,	*No public services.*
" East, Winthrop ch.	Ezekiel Russell, D. D.
Sharon, First Cong. church,	Perley B. Davis.
Stoughton, First church,	Thomas Wilson.
Weymouth, First church,	Joshua Emery.
" Second church,	James P. Terry,
" Un. ch. of Braintree and Weymouth,	Lysander Dickerman.
" South, Un. church,	Stephen H. Hayes.
" East, Cong. church,	James P. Lane.
" North, Pilgrim ch.	Samuel L. Rockwood.

OFFICER :—James P. Lane, East Weymouth, *Scribe.*

CONFERENCE MEETS on First Tuesday in May and Last Tuesday in September.

XIV. OLD COLONY. Organized September 23, 1856.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Dartmouth, South,	Martin S. Howard.
Fairhaven,	John Willard.
Marion,	Leander Cobb.
Mattapoisett,	*Vacant.*
Middleboro', First church,	Israel W. Putnam, D. D.
" Central church,	*Vacant.*
New Bedford, First church,	Asahel Cobb.
" North church,	Alonzo H. Quint.
" Trin. church,	Wheelock Craig.
" Pacific church,	Timothy Stone.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Rochester,	Edwin Leonard.
Wareham,	Timothy F. Clary.
Westport,	Isaac Dunham.

OFFICER :—Rev. Wheelock Craig, New Bedford, *Clerk.*
CONFERENCE MEETS on the Third Tuesdays in April and October.

XV. PILGRIM. Organized April 27, 1830.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Carver,	H. L. Chase.
Halifax,	T. G. Brainerd.
Hanover, First church,	Joseph Freeman.
" Second church,	James Aiken.
Hanson,	Benjamin Southworth, *s. s.*
Kingston,	Joseph Peckham, *s. s.*
Marshfield, First church,	E. Alden, Jr.
" Second church,	Daniel D. Tappan, *s. s.*
Plymouth, Second church,	Sylvester Holmes, *s. s.*
" Third church,	David Bremner, (pastor elect.)
" Fourth church.	Samuel Woodbury, *s. s.*
" Fifth church,	Alex. Fuller, Jr.
Plympton,	*Vacant.*
Scituate,	Alex. J. Sessions.

OFFICERS: — Rev. James Aiken, Hanover, *Moderator;* Rev. Alexander Fuller, Jr., Chiltonville, *Scribe* and *Treasurer.*
CONFERENCE MEETS on the Third Tuesdays of April and October.

XVI. SALEM MISSIONARY UNION. Organized June 11, 1851.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Boxford, First church,	William S. Coggin.
Danvers, First church,	C. B. Rice.
Lynn, First church,	*Vacant.*
" Central church,	J. B. Sewall.
" Chestnut-street church,	Edwin Smith, *s. s.*
Lynnfield,	Allen Gannett.
Marblehead, First church,	B. R. Allen.
" Third church,	T. D. P. Stone.
Salem, Tabernacle church,	C. R. Palmer.
Saugus,	Levi Brigham.
Swampscott,	J. B. Clark.
Topsfield,	A. McLoud.
Wenham,	J. S. Sewall.

OFFICERS :—Rev. S. M. Worcester, D. D., *President;* Rev. Wm. S. Coggin, *Vice President;* Rev. John S. Sewall, *Secretary;* Rev. Dr. Worcester, Rev. Wm. S. Coggin, Rev. John S. Sewall, Hon. R. P. Waters, Henry Whipple, Esq., *Executive Committee.*
CONFERENCE MEETS on the Second Wednesday in June, and in October.

XVII. Suffolk North. Organized . . . .

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Boston, Old South church,	G. W. Blagden, D. D. / Jacob M. Manning.
" Salem church,	Solomon P. Fay, *s. s.*
" Central church,	John E. Todd.
" Mt. Vernon church,	Edward N. Kirk, D. D.
" East, Maverick church,	Joel S. Bingham.
Cambridge, First church,	John A. Albro, D. D.
" Port, First church,	James O. Murray.
" " Second church,	*Vacant.*
" East, Ev. Cong. ch.	*Vacant.*
" North, Holmes ch.	William Carruthers.
Charlestown, First church,	James B. Miles.
" Winthrop church,	*Vacant.*
Chelsea, Winnissimet church,	Albert H. Plumb.
" Broadway church,	Joseph A. Copp, D. D.
Malden, South, Cong. church,	David M. Bean.
Medford, Trin. Cong. church,	Elihu P. Marvin.
Needham, West, Wellesley ch.	Henry D. Woodworth, *s. s.*
Newton Centre, First church,	Daniel L. Furber.
North Chelsea,	*Vacant.*
Reading, Old South church,	William Barrows.
Somerville, East, First church,	David T. Packard.
" Winter Hill,	*Vacant.*
Waltham,	Richard B. Thurston.

Officer:—Moses H. Sargent, 13 Cornhill, Boston, *Secretary.*
Conference meets in April and October.

XVIII. Suffolk South. Organized June 20, 1861.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Boston, Park-street church,	Andrew L. Stone, D. D.
" Union church,	Nehemiah Adams, D. D.
" Berkeley-street church,	Henry M. Dexter.
" Shawmut church,	Edwin B. Webb.
" Springfield-street church,	Daniel Tenney.
" Oak-place church,	Joseph P. Bixby.
" South, Phillips church,	Edmund K. Alden.
" " E-street church,	Abijah R. Baker, (pastor elect.)
Brighton, Evan. Cong. church,	John P. Cushman.
Brookline, Harvard church,	*Vacant.*
Dedham, First church,	Jonathan Edwards.
" South, So. Evan. church,	Moses M. Colburn.
Newton, Centre, First church,	Daniel L. Furber.
" West, Second church,	Henry J. Patrick.
" Corner, Eliot church,	Joshua W. Wellman.
" Auburndale, Ortho. ch.	Augustus H. Carrier.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Roxbury, Eliot church,	Augustus C. Thompson, D. D.
" Vine-street church,	John O. Means.
Watertown, Phillips church,	*Vacant.*
West Roxbury, South Evan. ch.	Thomas Laurie.
" Jamaica Plain, Mather church,	Francis B. Perkins.

OFFICER:—Rev H. J. Patrick, *Recording Secretary.*
CONFERENCE MEETS on the Third Wednesdays in April and October.

XIX. WOBURN. Organized December 5, 1849.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Bedford,	William J. Batt, *s. s.*
Billerica,	Jesse G. D. Stearns.
Burlington,	Joseph E. Swallow, *s. s.*
Carlisle,	*Vacant.*
Medford, Mystic church,	Edward P. Hooker.
Melrose,	Henry A. Stevens.
North Reading,	T. Newton Jones.
Reading, Bethesda church,	William H. Wilcox.
South Reading,	Charles R. Bliss.
Stoneham,	Swift Byington.
Wilmington,	Samuel H. Tolman.
Winchester,	Reuben T. Robinson.
Woburn, First church,	Joseph C. Bodwell, D. D.
" North church,	Willard M. Harding, *s. s.*

OFFICERS:—Rev. Joseph C. Bodwell. D. D., Woburn, *Moderator;* Rev. Edward P. Hooker, Medford, *Clerk.*
CONFERENCE MEETS on the Last Tuesdays in April and October.

XX. WORCESTER CENTRAL. Organized April 28, 1852.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Auburn,	Charles Kendall, *s. s.*
Berlin, First church,	William A. Houghton.
Boylston,	A. Hastings Ross.
Clinton, First Evan. church,	Benjamin Judkins, *s. s.*
Holden,	William P. Paine, D. D.
Leicester, First Cong. church,	John Nelson, D. D. and Amos H. Coolidge.
Northboro',	Samuel S. Ashley.
Oxford,	S. I. Austin.
Paxton,	William Phipps.
Princeton, Trinitarian church,	*Vacant.*
Rutland,	Clarendon Waite.
Shrewsbury,	William A. McGinley.
Sterling,	John C. Labaree, *s. s.*
West Boylston, First church,	James H. Fitts.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Worcester, First church,	Edward A. Walker.
" Calvinist church,	Seth Sweetser, D. D.
" Union church,	Ebenezer Cutler.
" Salem-street church,	Merrill Richardson.

OFFICER :—Rev. Charles Kendall, Auburn, *Scribe.*

CONFERENCE MEETS on the Wednesday following the Third Monday in April and October.

XXI. WORCESTER NORTH. Organized November 14, 1827.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Ashburnham, First church,	George E. Fisher.
" Second church,	Daniel Wight, Jr.
Athol,	John F. Norton.
Gardner, First church,	*Vacant.*
" Evangelical church,	*Vacant.*
Hubbardston,	*Vacant.*
Petersham,	L. H. Adams.
Phillipston,	Lyman White.
Royalston, First church,	Ebenezer W. Bullard.
" Second church,	F. D. Austin, *s. s.*
Templeton,	Lewis Sabin, D. D.
Westminster,	M. H. Hitchcock.
Winchendon, First church,	Benjamin F. Clarke.
" North church,	Abijah P. Marvin.

OFFICERS :—Rev. Ebenezer W. Bullard, Royalston, *Moderator* Rev. John F. Norton, Athol, *Clerk.*

CONFERENCE MEETS on the Second Tuesday in June.

XXII. WORCESTER SOUTH. Organized September 25, 1833.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Blackstone,	*Vacant.*
Douglas,	*Vacant.*
" East,	*Vacant.*
Grafton,	Thomas C. Biscoe.
" Saundersville,	Simeon Waters, *s. s.*
Millbury, First church,	Edmund Y. Garrette.
" Second church,	Charles H. Pierce.
Northbridge,	Sylvester Hine.
" Whitinsville,	Lewis F. Clark.
Sutton,	George Lyman.
Upton,	Andrew J. Willard.
Uxbridge,	*Vacant.*
Webster,	Sylvanus C. Kendall.
Westboro',	Luther H. Sheldon.

OFFICER :—Rev. George Lyman, Sutton, *Secretary.*

CONFERENCE MEETS on Fourth Tuesdays in April and October.

The General Conference of Massachusetts.

1865.

MINUTES

OF ITS

SIXTH ANNUAL SESSION,

HELD IN THE

NORTH CHURCH, HAVERHILL,

SEPTEMBER 12—14,

WITH

ESSAYS, REPORTS,

AND A

LIST OF THE LOCAL CONFERENCES, AND OF THE CHURCHES CONNECTED WITH THEM.

BOSTON:
CONGREGATIONAL BOARD OF PUBLICATION.
1865.

The General Conference of Massachusetts.

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BOSTON:
PRESS OF T. R. MARVIN & SON, 42 CONGRESS STREET.
1865.

NOTICES.

THE meeting of the Conference in 1866, will be held in the First Church, Northampton, commencing on Tuesday, the 13th of September, at 4 o'clock, P. M., and closing at 4 o'clock of the Thursday following.

Rev. JONATHAN EDWARDS, of Dedham, is elected Preacher of the opening Sermon, and Rev. AUGUSTUS C. THOMPSON, D. D., of Roxbury, Substitute.

Essex South Conference will furnish the Preacher of the Sermon which is to be delivered before the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

The Scribes of the Local Conferences are requested to see that five Delegates, with their Substitutes, to the General Conference, are elected at the *Spring Meeting;* and to forward immediately to the Recording Secretary the names in full, and the Post Office address, of the Delegates and Substitutes elected. The Scribes are also requested to notify the Delegates of their election, a few weeks before the meeting of the General Conference.

OFFICERS.

Provisional Committee for 1866.

Rev. ZACHARY EDDY, D. D., Northampton.
Rev. GORDON HALL, Northampton.
Rev. ROWLAND AYRES, Hadley.
Bro. WILLIAM ELLIOT, Greenfield.
Bro. J. P. WILLISTON, Northampton.

Recording Secretary.

Rev. JOSHUA W. WELLMAN, Newton.

Statistical Secretary.

Rev. ALONZO H. QUINT, New Bedford.

Treasurer.

Bro. STEPHEN T. FARWELL, Cambridge.

MINUTES.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES OF MASSACHUSETTS convened in the meeting-house of the North Congregational Church and Society of Haverhill, on the twelfth day of September, 1865, at four o'clock, P. M., and at five o'clock, there being a quorum present, Rev. Raymond H. Seely, D. D., called the meeting to order.

Rev. Andrew L. Stone, D. D., of Boston, was chosen Moderator, and on taking the Chair conducted the devotional exercises; after which Bro. J. Russell Bradford, of Boston, was chosen Scribe.

The Conference then proceeded to appoint Committees as follows.

On Credentials.—Rev. Caleb E. Fisher, of Lawrence; Rev. Wheelock Craig, New Bedford; Bro. Andrew Bacon, Egremont.

Committee of Arrangements.—Rev. Raymond H. Seely, D. D., of Haverhill; Rev. James T. McCollom, of Bradford; Rev. Theodore T. Munger, of Haverhill.

On Nominations.—Rev. David A. Strong, of Deerfield; Rev. Alonzo B. Rich, of Beverly; Rev. Marshall B. Angier, of Sturbridge.

After singing, and prayer offered by Dea. Elbridge Clapp, of Quincy, the Conference adjourned to meet at half past seven o'clock, P. M.

Tuesday evening.—The Conference assembled at half past seven o'clock. Devotional exercises were conducted by Rev. J. Eames Rankin, of Charlestown, after which a sermon was preached by Rev. Andrew L. Stone, D. D., of Boston, from the text,—"Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel; your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood, unto the drawer of thy water; that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day; that he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God." Deuteronomy xxix. 10—13.

After these services, the Chairman of the Committee on Credentials reported the names of all members of the Conference, so far as they were present.

ROLL OF DELEGATES.

Andover Conference:—

Rev. Caleb E. Fisher, Lawrence.
Rev. Charles Smith, Andover.
Bro. Sewall G. Mack, Lowell.
Bro. Joseph How, Methuen.

Barnstable County Conference:—

Rev. Henry A. Goodhue, West Barnstable.
Rev. Alvan J. Bates, Harwich Port.
Bro. David G. Eldridge, Yarmouth.

Berkshire South Conference:—

Bro. Andrew Bacon, Egremont.
Bro. John Brewer, New Marlboro'.
Rev. Nahum Gale, D. D., Lee.

Brookfield Conference:—

Rev. Marshall B. Angier, Sturbridge.

Essex North Conference:—

Bro. Francis Sargent, West Amesbury.
Rev. Daniel T. Fiske, D. D., Newburyport.
Rev. John R. Thurston, Newbury.
Bro. Albert Currier, Newburyport.
Bro. John Crowell, Haverhill.

Essex South Conference:—

Rev. Eli W. Harrington, North Beverly.
Rev. Alonzo B. Rich, Beverly.
Bro. David Choate, Essex.
Bro. Rufus Putnam, Danvers.

Franklin County Conference:—

Rev. Theodore J. Clark, Ashfield.
Bro. William Elliot, Greenfield.
Rev. David A. Strong, South Deerfield.
Bro. Austin Rice, Conway.

Hampden County Conference:—

Rev. Lewis Grout, Feeding Hills.
Bro. Cornelius S. Hurlbut, Springfield.
Rev. Joseph Vaill, D. D., Palmer.

Hampshire East Conference:—

Rev. Solomon Clark, Plainfield.

Mendon Conference:—

Rev. Jacob Roberts, East Medway.
Bro. Anson Daniels, West Medway.
Rev. Jacob Ide, Jr., Mansfield.

Middlesex South Conference:—

Rev. Thomas S. Norton, Dover.
Bro. James Farrar, Jr., Lincoln.
Rev. Elnathan E. Strong, South Natick.
Bro. Moses L. Buck, Hopkinton.

Middlesex Union Conference:—

Rev. M. C. Stebbins, Groton Junction.
Bro. John Proctor, Townsend.

Norfolk Conference:—

Bro. Elbridge Clapp, Quincy.
Bro. Alvah Raymond, East Weymouth.
Rev. Ebenezer Douglass, Bridgewater.
Bro. Stephen H. Hayes, South Weymouth.
Bro. Samuel W. S. Howard, Bridgewater.

Old Colony Conference:—

Rev. Wheelock Craig, New Bedford.

Pilgrim Conference:—

Rev. Timothy G. Brainard, Halifax.
Rev. Benjamin Southworth, Hanson.
Bro. David P. Hatch, North Mansfield.
Bro. George M. Baker, Marshfield.

Suffolk North Conference:—

Rev. J. Eames Rankin, Charlestown.

Suffolk South Conference:—

Rev. Andrew L. Stone, D. D., Boston.
Bro. J. Russell Bradford, Roxbury.
Rev. Edwin B. Webb, D. D., Boston.

Taunton and Vicinity Conference:—

Bro. Benjamin King, Raynham.

Woburn Conference:—

Rev. Edward P. Hooker, Medford.
Bro. Stillman E. Parker, Reading.
Rev. Charles R. Bliss, South Reading.
Bro. Henry L. Bancroft, Wilmington.

Worcester Central Conference:—

Rev. Amos H. Coolidge, Leicester.
Bro. Seth Daniels, Oxford.

Worcester North Conference:—

Rev. Milan H. Hitchcock, Westminster.
Bro. Lewis Thorp, Athol.
Bro. Courtlan Sanderson, Phillipston.

Worcester South Conference:—

EX OFFICIIS.

Rev. Joshua W. Wellman, *Recording Secretary.*
Rev. Alonzo H. Quint, *Statistical Secretary.*
Bro. Stephen T. Farwell, *Treasurer.*

FROM CORRESPONDING BODIES.

Rev. William R. Jewett, of Fisherville, N. H., from the General Association of New Hampshire.

Rev. Benjamin C. Chase, Foxcroft, Me., from the General Conference of the Congregational Churches in Maine.

Rev. Edward Ebbs, of Paris, Canada West, from the Congregational Union of Canada.

Adjourned to meet at half-past eight o'clock on Wednesday morning.

SECOND DAY.

Wednesday, September 13. At half-past eight o'clock the Moderator called the Conference to order, and requested Prof. Elijah P. Barrows, of Andover, to conduct the devotional exercises, which were continued for one hour.

FIRST ESSAY.

Rev. Elihu P. Marvin, of Medford, read an Essay on "The Duty of Congregationalism to Itself."

A discussion followed, participated in by the following gentlemen: Prof. Egbert C. Smyth, of Andover, who had been requested to speak on the subject; Rev. Nahum Gale, D. D., of Lee; Rev. Lewis Grout, of Feeding Hills; Rev. Abijah P. Marvin, of Winchendon; Rev. Edwin B. Webb, D. D., of Boston; Rev. James T. McCollom, of Bradford; Bro. William Elliot, of Greenfield; and Rev. Joseph C. Bodwell, D. D., of Woburn.

BUSINESS.

The Constitution and By-Laws were read by the Recording Secretary.

On motion of Bro. Bradford, it was voted to adjourn at quarter past twelve o'clock, to meet again at two o'clock.

Voted, That the Rev. John W. Chickering, D. D., be heard on the subject of Temperance, at five o'clock this afternoon.

On motion of Dea. David Choate, of Essex, it was

"*Voted*, That whereas it is believed that during the discussions of the Conference, many important, eloquent and impressive truths are uttered, which should not be lost, but which now never reach the churches, and are but too soon forgotten by many of those in attendance; therefore,

"*Resolved*, That ——— be a Committee to inquire into the expediency of procuring the services of a Reporter to take full notes during such discussions, and that such notes be furnished to the Committee of the Conference, to be published at their discretion. Also to ascertain the expense of employing such a Reporter; and that such Committee be requested to report on Thursday morning."

On motion of Rev. Raymond H. Seely, D. D.,

Voted, "That a Committee of five be appointed to attend to railroad fares for the ensuing year, with a view to the reduction of the expense of going to and from the Conference.

The Committee on Nominations recommended that Rev. J. Eames Rankin, of Charlestown; Rev. Joseph Vail, D. D., of Palmer; and Dea. David Choate, of Essex, be appointed as the Committee on the State of Religion, and they were chosen.

On recommendation of the same Committee, Dea. David Choate, of Essex, was chosen Auditor.

At quarter past twelve o'clock the Conference adjourned, to meet again at two o'clock.

Wednesday Afternoon. The Conference assembled, according to adjournment.

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rev. Abijah P. Marvin, of Winchendon, and continued for half an hour.

REPORTS ON PAROCHIAL EVANGELIZATION.

Rev. William Barrows, of Reading, Chairman of the Committee on Home Evangelization, read a Report, after which Rev. Daniel P. Noyes, of Boston, who has been employed by the Committee during the past year to labor in the State in behalf of popular Christianization, also read a Report.*

A motion was offered that a Committee of one from each Conference, be appointed as a Committee to consider and act upon the subject of Home Evangelization. Rev. Edwin B. Webb, D. D., of Boston; Rev. George Trask, of Fitchburg, and Rev. Joshua W. Wellman, of Newton, discussed the question, when it was voted, unanimously, that said Committee be chosen. The discussion was then continued by Rev. Nahum Gale, D. D., of Lee; Rev. Stephen H. Hayes, of South Weymouth; Rev. Benjamin C. Chase, of Foxcroft, Me.; Rev. Milan C. Stebbins, of Groton Junction; Bro. Andrew Bacon, of Egremont; Rev. Thomas S. Norton, of Dover; Rev. Raymond H. Seely, D. D., of Haverhill, and Rev. Henry B. Hooker, D. D., of Boston.

BUSINESS.

At five o'clock, the Committee on Nominations reported, and the Conference made choice of a Committee on Finance; namely, Bro. Stephen T. Farwell, of Boston; Rev. Timothy G. Brainard, of Halifax, and Bro. Elbridge Clapp, of Quincy.

TEMPERANCE.

Rev. John W. Chickering, D. D., addressed the Conference on the subject of Temperance.

* See Reports published in full with these Minutes.

BUSINESS.

The following Committees were appointed, at the suggestion of the Nominating Committee.

On the State of the Country.—Rev. Edward P. Hooker, of Medford; Bro. Lewis Thorpe, of Athol; Bro. Austin Rice, of Conway.

Provisional Committee for 1866.—Rev. Zachary Eddy, D. D., of Northampton; Rev. Gordon Hall, of Northampton; Rev. Rowland Ayres, of Hadley; Bro. William Elliot, of Greenfield; Bro. J. P. Williston, of Northampton.

On the Subject of Railroad Fares.—Rev. Zachary Eddy, D. D., of Northampton; Rev. Rowland Ayres, of Hadley; Rev. Solomon Clark, of Plainfield; Bro. William Elliot, of Greenfield; Bro. J. P. Williston, of Northampton.

On the Question of Employing a Reporter.—Rev. Elihu P. Marvin, of Medford; Bro. Elbridge Clapp, of Quincy; Rev. Edward P. Hooker, of Medford.

On Home Evangelization.—Rev. Nahum Gale, D. D., of Lee; Rev. Charles Smith, of Andover; Rev. Henry A. Goodhue, of West Barnstable; Rev. Marshall B. Angier, of Sturbridge; Bro. Albert Currier, of Newburyport; Bro. Rufus Putnam, of Danvers; Rev. Theodore J. Clark, of Ashfield; Rev. J. Eames Rankin, of Charlestown; Rev. Edwin B. Webb, D. D., of Boston; Bro. Benjamin King, of Raynham; Rev. Charles R. Bliss, of South Reading; Rev. Amos H. Coolidge, of Leicester; Rev. M. H. Hitchcock, of Westminster; Rev. Lewis Grout, of Feeding Hills; Rev. Solomon Clark, of Plainfield; Rev. Jacob Roberts, of East Medway; Rev. Elnathan E. Strong, of South Natick; Rev. M. C. Stebbins, of Groton Junction; Rev. Ebenezer Douglas, of Bridgewater; Rev. Wheelock Craig, of New Bedford; Rev. Timothy G. Brainard, of Halifax.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE.

The Treasurer of the Conference presented his Report, which, having been audited, was referred to the Committee on Finance: subsequently this Committee reported as follows:—

The Committee on Finance, to whom was referred the Treasurer's account, in discharge of their duty, respectfully report that the actual expenses for the past year amount to the sum of three hundred and eighty-one dollars,

and they estimate the probable expenses of the ensuing year at about three hundred and sixty dollars. The Committee recommend the adoption of the following vote:—

Voted, That the Treasurer be directed to notify the Scribes or Treasurers of the several Local Conferences, of the assessment upon each Conference of a sum equal to one dollar for each church, and to request those officers to collect the same immediately, and forward it to the Treasurer of the General Conference.

This Report was accepted and adopted.

AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION.

Voted, That the amendment of the seventh article of the Constitution, and also the amendment to the fifteenth article, as they were proposed last year, be adopted.

At half past five o'clock, adjourned.

Wednesday evening, at half past seven o'clock, the Conference was called to order, and Rev. Edward A. Lawrence, D. D. of East Windsor, Conn., offered prayer.

REPORT ON HOME EVANGELIZATION.

A partial Report on Home Evangelization was made by Rev. Nahum Gale, D. D., the Chairman of the Committee to whom this subject was referred, as follows:—

The Committee to whom was referred the Report of the Committee of the Conference on Home Evangelization, and the Report of Rev. Daniel P. Noyes on this subject, recommend that the Report of Mr. Noyes be accepted, and his suggestions and recommendations accompanying the Report be adopted, and that the Report be printed under direction of the Conference.

Rev. Daniel P. Noyes addressed the Conference upon the subject of Home Evangelization, and the discussion of the subject was continued by Bro. David Choate, of Essex; Rev. Raymond H. Seely, D. D., of Haverhill; Rev. Caleb E. Fisher, of Lawrence; Rev. James A. Roberts, of Berkley; Rev. William Barrows, of Reading; Rev. Alonzo H. Quint, of New Bedford; and Rev. Elbridge G. Little, of Middleboro'.

After this discussion, the report on Home Evangelization made by Rev. Nahum Gale, D. D., the Chairman of the Committee to whom this subject was referred, was accepted and adopted.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CHURCHES.

Voted, That the Conference make the following recommendations to the churches.

1. That every church, solemnly, by vote, with prayer and vows of consecration, recognize its work and its field; where possible, marking out definitely the boundaries of its separate parish.

When two or more churches draw their congregations from the same territory, they are requested to recognize this as their *joint parish*, and statedly to take counsel together respecting it—appointing stated meetings for this purpose.

In all cases it is understood that the Congregational churches include within their own parishes only Congregational and neglected families; desiring not to interfere with other denominations, but to labor in harmony with them.

2. That every church set apart one of their regular prayer meetings—on the evening of the third Sabbath in every month, when convenient—to the work of the church among its own people; to be called *The Home Prayer Meeting*.

3. That every church investigate its field, and make report of facts and statistics, in accordance with the blanks furnished for that purpose in the Minutes of the Conference.

4. That efforts be at once made in the *Local Conferences of Churches*; (1.) To see that movements are promptly commenced, looking towards the formation of churches in all destitute communities large enough to justify such a step. (2.) To secure the apportionment among the churches of all outlying neighborhoods and districts. (3.) To press the immediate commencement, in all such communities, of some kind of Christian effort. (4.) To provide for the collection and collation of facts and statistics. (5.) To arrange circuits, when necessary. (6.) To consult upon the practicability of securing *lay-helpers* for pastors whose parishes include branch congregations which the pastors are unable to serve with sufficient frequency. (7.) To appoint Standing Committees on Popular Christianization, in furtherance of these and other similar objects.

It is suggested that the Scribes of the several Conferences be requested to bring these recommendations before the same—unless this should be done without their motion,—and to report the views and action of the Conferences to the State Secretary, to be by him laid before the churches of the State through their next General Conference.

On recommendation of the Nominating Committee, Dea. Andrew Bacon, of Egremont, was chosen one of the Committee on Home Evangelization, in place of Rev. Dr. Gale, who was obliged to leave the Conference.

At half past nine adjourned, to meet at half past eight o'clock, A. M., on Thursday.

THIRD DAY.

Thursday morning. At half past eight the Conference was called to order by the Moderator; who requested Rev. Joseph C. Bodwell, D. D., to conduct religious exercises, which were continued an half hour.

BUSINESS.

On motion of Rev. Stephen H. Hayes, of South Weymouth:

Voted, That it be considered the duty of the Statistical Secretary to prepare, and present annually to the Conference, the Report upon the State of Religion.

CONGREGATIONAL LIBRARY.

Rev. Abijah P. Marvin addressed the Conference in behalf of the interests of the Congregational Library, and a building for its use.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE STATE OF RELIGION.

Rev. J. Eames Rankin, chairman of the Committee to whom the subject was referred, made a Report upon the State of Religion,* which was accepted.

REPRESENTATIVES OF CORRESPONDING BODIES.

Reports from Corresponding Bodies were made by Rev. William R. Jewett, of Fisherville, from the General Association of New Hampshire. Rev. Benj. C. Chase, of Foxcroft, from the General Conference of Maine, and by Rev. Edward Ebbs, of Paris, Canada West, from the Congregational Union of Canada.

REPORTS OF DELEGATES TO CORRESPONDING BODIES.

Bro. Cyrus Brewer, of Dorchester, and Bro. Nathan Allen, of Lowell, who were delegated by the Conference in 1864, to attend the General Conferences of Maine and Rhode Island, made reports.

SECOND ESSAY.

The appointed hour having arrived, Professor Edwards A. Park, of Andover, read an Essay, the subject being "How shall the Wants of the Churches for Ministers be met."

Remarks upon the Essay were made by Rev. Seth Sweetser, D. D., of Worcester, and Rev. Joseph C. Bodwell, D. D., of Woburn.

* See Report published in full with the Minutes.

REPLY TO CORRESPONDING BODIES.

An eloquent and appropriate reply to the addresses of the representatives from Corresponding Bodies was made by the Moderator.

REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE COUNTRY.

A Report on the State of the Country was offered by Rev. Edward P. Hooker, of Medford, Chairman of the Committee to whom that subject was referred, and the Report was accepted.

HOME EVANGELIZATION.

Rev. Charles Smith, of Andover, in the absence of the Chairman of the Committee on Home Evangelization, presented a further Report, accompanied by certain Resolutions, and the Report was accepted, and the Resolutions adopted.

RESOLUTIONS ON HOME EVANGELIZATION.

1. *Resolved*, That to meet the immediate exigency, and for the present year, a Committee be appointed, consisting of the chairmen of the several Committees on Home Evangelization in the several Local Conferences, and one other person from each Conference, whom the Conference itself shall appoint, the Secretary of Home Evangelization, the Statistical and Recording Secretary of this Body, and its Committee on Home Evangelization for the year past, whose duty it shall be to supervise and direct this work, through its Secretary on Home Evangelization; and that for convenience this Committee be empowered to transact such of its business as seems to them best through a sub-committee.

2. *Resolved*, That this Committee have power to fill any vacancies in its own body for Conferences not represented, till such time as any such Conference shall appoint its own members.

3. *Resolved*, That the members of the Standing Committee on Home Evangelization, from each Conference, be a Committee, each in their own Conference, to ask for and receive funds from the several churches in their Conferences, for the support of this cause, and in the following ratio to membership:

From each church having less than 100 resident members:							$5.00	more or less.
From each having over	100	and less than	150	"	$10.00	"		
"	"	"	150	"	200	"	$15.00	"
"	"	"	200	"	250	"	$20.00	"
"	"	"	250	.	.	.	$25.00	"

4. *Resolved*, That while we assume the support for the present year, of the cause of Home Evangelization, we yet feel that the work properly belongs to our Home Missionary Society, and we earnestly recommend that it be assumed by that Society as soon as possible.

AMERICAN CONGREGATIONAL ASSOCIATION.

On motion of Rev. Joshua W. Wellman, it was

Voted, That the Conference cordially approve the design of the American Congregational Association, to raise the sum of $100,000, for the purpose of erecting a Congregational House, to be the depository of a complete Library of Congregational and Puritan History and Literature, and the centre of our benevolent operations; and we earnestly commend the object to our churches as worthy of their liberal gifts.

PUBLICATION OF DOCUMENTS.

Voted, That the Secretaries and the Treasurer be a committee to attend to and cause to be printed, the Minutes of this Conference.

PLACE AND PREACHER FOR 1866.

On motion of Rev. Solomon Clark, of Plainfield, it was

Voted, That the Conference for 1866 be held in the First Church (Rev. Dr. Eddy's) in Northampton; that Rev. Jonathan Edwards, of Dedham, be requested to preach the Sermon, and that Rev. A. C. Thompson, D. D., of Roxbury, be appointed as Substitute.

REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE COUNTRY.

The Committee on the State of the Country made a Report. The Report was accepted and the Resolutions were adopted.

Whereas, The past year has witnessed the close of our terrible civil war—the most bloody and eventful period of our national history thus far—and

Whereas, We stand to-day upon the threshold of a new period, if possible still more momentous than the last, we deem it fit to record these acknowledgments and solemn convictions with reference to our country. Therefore,

Resolved, That we acknowledge our restored peace as the gift of Almighty God; that we recognize his marked interpositions and deliverances during the war; that we render to Him our profound thanks for its issues—the integrity of our territory, the vindication of our Government, the confirmation of civil and religious liberty, and the enfranchisement both of our country and of its slaves from the curse of bondage.

Resolved, That we gratefully recognize the heroic devotion of our national defenders, on sea and on land; that we honor the living, and honor and mourn the dead.

Resolved, That we record our horror at the unprecedented crime of the rebellion in its motive and methods; and our earnest conviction, that, while mercy should be extended to the ignorant and deceived, the most solemn judicial witness should be borne against treason and its nefarious schemes of murder.

Resolved, That it is our urgent conviction, that haste should be avoided in the reconstruction of our Union; that its foundations should be laid in Justice; that justice to those whom we have so long and so deeply wronged, and who have served the country so faithfully while so many have proved faithless: and our own future security, alike demand, that impartial suffrage be given to the inhabitants of our country, without distinction of race or color; and that we regard the general prevalence of Christianity, rendering the principles of society and of government homogeneous throughout all the States of our Union, as the only permanent security against future rebellion and anarchy; and that we discern, at the South especially, the need of the Republican church polity of our Fathers, as well as of their Puritan doctrines.

Resolved, That we regard the opening of the South to Christian effort, the new energy awakened by the war, the tenderness of feeling induced by it, and our release from its absorbing enterprises and heavy burdens, as a call from God to more earnest prayer and effort for the Christianizing of our land, and an indication of his willingness to aid and bless.

Therefore, Resolved, That we accept this call from God; that we rejoice in the privilege of living in these days of primordial forces and earnest labors; and that, waiting by prayer "for the promise of the Father," we will pass with earnestness to the duties of our new period, and that we will follow the cross with the same devotion and sacrifice if need be, with which we have followed the flag, until the banner of the Great Captain of our Salvation waves triumphantly over a Republic regenerated and Christianized.

REPORTER.

Rev. Elihu P. Marvin, Chairman of the Committee to whom the subject of employing a Reporter was referred, reported: that the expense would probably not exceed fifty dollars a year; and recommended that a Reporter be engaged for the ensuing year. This report was accepted, and it was voted to comply with the recommendation.

DELEGATES TO CORRESPONDING BODIES.

The Committee on Nominations recommended the choice of the following gentlemen as Delegates to other Conference, and they were appointed.

To the General Conference of Rhode Island:
Bro. William Chapin, of Lawrence, Primary.
Rev. C. M. Cordley, of Lawrence, Substitute.

To the General Conference of Maine:
Rev. S. H. Hayes, of South Weymouth, Primary.
Bro. M. S. Scudder, of Grantville, Substitute.

To the General Association of New Hampshire:
Rev. A. H. Quint, of New Bedford, Primary.
Bro. Albert Currier, of Newburyport, Substitute.

To the Congregational Union of Canada:
Bro. Alvah Raymond, of East Weymouth, Primary.
Rev. E. E. Strong, of South Natick, Substitute.

To the General Association of Iowa:
Rev. Nahum Gale, D. D., of Lee, Primary.
Bro. David Choate, of Essex, Substitute.

To the General Convention of Vermont:
Bro. William Elliot, of Greenfield, Vt., Primary.
Rev. A. B. Rich, of Beverly, Substitute.

VOTE OF THANKS.

On motion of Rev. J. Eames Rankin, of Charlestown, it was

Resolved, That the thanks of this Conference be presented to this church and congregation, and their pastor, and to the other churches and congregations in this town and its vicinity, who have extended to us the cordial and liberal hospitality which we have enjoyed.

Rev. Raymond H. Seely, D. D., responded briefly to the foregoing vote.

The Conference then adjourned, to meet at half-past two o'clock, for public worship and the observance of the Lord's Supper.

Thursday, P. M. At half-past two o'clock, the Conference assembled, according to adjournment, when a Sermon was preached by Rev. Daniel T. Fiske, D D., of Newburyport. Text, John xii. 32.

After the Sermon, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was celebrated, Rev. Caleb E. Fisher, of Lawrence, and Rev. Edward Ebbs, of Paris, Canada West, officiating. After which the Conference adjourned, *sine die*.

A. L. STONE, *Moderator*.

J. RUSSELL BRADFORD, *Scribe*.

A true copy of the Minutes.

Attest, JOSHUA W. WELLMAN,
Recording Secretary.

CONSTITUTION.

1. This body shall be called the GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES IN MASSACHUSETTS.

2. The object of this Conference is to secure Christian union, fellowship and intercourse among the churches; to promote spirituality; incite to a more elevated piety, and stimulate Christians to greater activity and efficiency in advancing the Redeemer's kingdom.

3. This Conference shall, under no circumstances, exercise ecclesiastical authority, or interfere with the government or discipline of the churches, or consent to hear appeals, or give advice in ecclesiastical causes of any kind.

4. Each Local Conference, composed of evangelical Congregational Churches within the State, may appoint five delegates to attend the annual meeting of the Conference, two of whom shall be pastors of churches, and three lay members.

5. The officers of the Conference shall be a Moderator, a Recording Secretary, a Statistical Secretary, and a Treasurer.

6. The Moderator shall be chosen by ballot from among the delegates present, and shall preside during the meeting for which he is chosen.

7. The Secretaries and Treasurer shall be chosen by ballot, and continue in office three years; and they shall be *ex officiis* members of the Conference.

8. The Recording Secretary shall keep a fair record of the doings of each meeting, in a book to be kept for that purpose, which shall be transmitted to his successor in office.

9. The Statistical Secretary shall collect and arrange such statistics as the Conference may order; shall distribute all documents received for the use of the Conference, or printed by them; and shall preserve a copy of all the publications of the Conference.

10. The Treasurer shall receive all money raised for the use of the Conference, disburse the same as directed, and present an annual report, audited as the Conference may direct.

11. Any ordained pastor or member of a Congregational Church within the bounds of the State, shall be eligible to the offices of Secretary, Statistical Secretary and Treasurer.

12. The Conference may receive delegates from other State evangelical religious bodies, representing Congregational Churches, who shall be considered honorary members, and be admitted to the privilege of participating in the deliberations of the meeting, but shall not be allowed to vote; and the Conference may reciprocate the courtesy by appointing delegates to such bodies.

13. Twenty-five regularly appointed delegates shall constitute a quorum.

14. The Conference shall hold an Annual Meeting on the second Tuesday in September, at such place as shall be designated, to commence at four o'clock, or other more convenient hour, in the afternoon, and to close at four o'clock in the afternoon of the Thursday following.

15. A Sermon shall be preached on the evening of the first day of the meeting; and another, adapted to the occasion, on the afternoon of the last day, to be followed by the Lord's Supper, to be administered generally without remarks; and the ministers who preach the sermons shall be *ex officiis* members of the Conference.

16. Brief narratives of the state of religion within the bounds of Local Conferences, shall be presented in writing to a Committee appointed to receive them, which shall be embodied in a Report and read by the Committee, at such time as the Conference may appoint.

17. Other services of the Conference shall consist of devotional exercises, addresses and discussions upon subjects of practical religious interest, together with the objects of benevolent enterprise sustained by the churches, to be provided for and arranged as shall be laid down in the By-Laws.

18. The Conference shall establish By-Laws and Rules of Order for the regulation of its business, which shall be adopted by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any annual meeting.

19. Any proposition to alter or amend a By-Law shall be made at the annual meeting previous to the one at which it is acted upon.

20. Any article of this Constitution may be altered or amended by a two-thirds vote, at any annual meeting, provided that the proposition is made at any previous annual meeting, excepting that *article third* shall be held unalterable.

BY-LAWS.

1. At the appointed hour of meeting, the Pastor of the church where the meeting is held shall call to order; the certificates of delegates shall be immediately presented to the Recording Secretary, and a quorum being declared present, a Moderator shall be chosen.

2. The Moderator shall open the meeting with devotional exercises, and at the opening of each subsequent session, shall appoint some person to offer prayer.

3. A Committee of three shall be appointed to act as a Committee of Arrangements.

4. At each meeting, a Provisional Committee, of five persons, shall be appointed to arrange the schedule for the subsequent meeting; to designate the place, and to nominate a preacher for the opening sermon.

5. The preacher of the sermon before the communion, shall be chosen by the Local Conferences, in alphabetical order.

6. In order to separate the business from the religious services, special times shall be designated, at which all business of the Conference shall be transacted.

7. Whenever it shall appear to the Committee appointed to embody the narratives of the state of religion, that the religious condition within any Local Conference justifies a more detailed recital, a delegate from every such Conference may make verbal statements to the meeting, under the direction of the Committee.

8. The Conference shall determine, by vote, what objects of Christian benevolence may from time to time be presented, and the particular objects to be presented at any meeting shall be determined by the Provisional Committee.

9. The Constitution and By-Laws shall be read near the opening of the session, on the second day.

10. When a report is made, the question shall be, "Shall the report be accepted?" If resolutions are appended, the question may be divided at the request of any member, and the vote taken separately on accepting the report, and on accepting the resolutions.

11. The motion for the "previous question" shall be put without debate, and if carried, the main question shall be immediately put.

12. The Conference shall observe the usual rules of order in deliberative bodies, in all cases where it has no special rule of its own.

13. Before adjournment, the minutes of the meeting shall be read for approval.

REPORT ON THE STATE OF RELIGION

IN THE

CHURCHES CONNECTED WITH THE CONFERENCE.

The Lord Jesus Christ has said, His kingdom cometh not with observation. It is a sovereignty established over consciences and hearts, the history of whose beginning and progress never can be written upon earth. The unwritten history of the Congregational churches of this Commonwealth during the last year,—their history as God has seen it, and as the pen of His angel has recorded it, to be made the contemplation of ages to come,—the history of the inner life and struggles of pastors, their sources of encouragement and discouragement, of the prayers and labors of devoted church members, of the fight of afflictions which many households have been called to encounter,—this history is the truest history of our churches,—but no human mind can know it, no human hand record it.

We are left to consider the outward and visible signs of the presence and progress of this kingdom, and these are sufficiently meagre and unsatisfactory. Upon the ashes of war, while the brands were scarcely extinguished, God has been scattering the seeds of long neglected truth. This war has been the nation's catechism, out of which God has taught the people His sovereignty, the doctrines of depravity, and the power of interceding prayer. This truth lies as yet hidden in the soil, but it will surely bring forth its harvest. The time will come, when it will be seen that this tuition of God's providence has not been lost. And even though the enemy come in like a flood,—though profanity, Sabbath desecration and deeds of violence and blood abound,—yet we are to remember that this is the very juncture when it is predicted that the Lord will lift up a standard against him.

Your Committee have received Reports from nineteen of the twenty-two Local Conferences, according to last year's minutes connected with this body. From these Reports they have endeavored to seize upon the more salient points, which they now lay before you.

The Andover Conference, which stands at the head of the list, announces considerable religious interest in the First church in Lowell, and a gentle awakening, especially among the young, now in progress at North Chelmsford. Special efforts have been made to promote the cause of temperance, which have not been unrewarded. Foundations for a new house of worship on the north side in Lawrence will soon be laid; while within the year a new chapel has been erected by the united churches on the south side, in which Prof. E. A. Park, of Andover, has engaged to preach for twelve months. There is prospect of a full Junior Class at Andover. All the professorships are filled, and the new chapel is nearly completed.

In the Barnstable Conference, many of the churches have made a change of ministers; but all except two are now supplied. During the winter, there was at Orleans an extensive revival, resulting in the conversion of fifty or sixty persons, a large proportion of whom have united with the church. Though favored with outward prosperity, the rest of the churches have been without any especial tokens of God's presence.

Berkshire South Conference reports especial religious interest in Otis, Monterey, and Housatonic; while there have been some additions to most of the other churches. Increased attention is paid to Sabbath schools, and increased interest is felt in the meetings of the Conference, which during the seasons of autumn and winter occur monthly.

In the Brookfield Associational Conference, there has been a state of general external prosperity, indicated by repairs upon church edifices, increase in ministers' salaries, and advance in the amount of benevolent contributions. The towns of Sturbridge, North Brookfield, West Brookfield, Ware, Brimfield, and New Braintree, have enjoyed seasons of awakening. Sabbath schools have been enlarged, and the cause of temperance especially promoted.

Three churches connected with the Essex North Conference,—Amesbury-Mill Village, Groveland, and the North in Newburyport,—have received new pastors; while from the East church in Haverhill, and the First in West Newbury, pastors have been dismissed. Two churches, the names of which are not mentioned, have had a season of especial religious interest. New zeal has been awakened in the cause of temperance, and Christians have been brought to feel that this cause must have in its favor the moral power of the churches.

In the Essex South Conference, two or three churches have undertaken something in the way of Home Evangelization; enough to reveal the pressing necessity of such labors. But most of them have seemed reluctant to grapple with the subject. Increased interest is

reported in Sabbath schools, though the fear is expressed that too much dependence is placed upon human machinery, and too little upon Divine assistance. Temperance organizations have been formed in various places, and it is believed that much of the difficulty of enforcing the Prohibitory Law arises from incorrect sentiment in the Christian church.

No extensive revivals are reported in the Franklin Conference; though upon several churches the gentle dews of heaven have fallen, and sinners have been converted to God. This is true of Conway and Shelburne; while individual conversions have occurred in various other places. Divided churches have become harmonious. Feeble churches, of which there are not a few, prize the gospel ordinances more highly, and contribute more liberally for their support. Attention has been specially directed to the old wastes. Ministers have been compelled to practice great economy, but no pastoral relations have, on this account, been disturbed. Rev. A. Chandler, D. D., of Greenfield, and Rev. Isaac L. Perry, of Northfield, have gone to their eternal rest and reward; the former in full age, and as a shock of corn in his season. Some of the churches have been diminished by the war. One church of sixty members has contributed fourteen to the army, five of whom will return no more. Many families are in mourning for the loss of their loved ones who have thus fallen.

In the Hampden County Conference several churches have experienced seasons of refreshing, though none report revivals of religion. Much interest is felt in the work of Home Evangelization, and for eighteen months a home missionary has been employed to labor in the destitute places, while considerable success has attended his efforts.

The Mendon Conference reports external prosperity, but laments the deficiency of prayer and earnest zeal for the cause of the Redeemer. One church, not named, has enjoyed a precious season of religious interest, and a large number, among whom are heads of families, are rejoicing in hope. The temperance cause makes no progress. The manufacture of cider and home-made wines is on the increase.

In the South Middlesex Conference, all the churches are in a state of outward prosperity, with flourishing Sabbath schools. The Prohibitory Law has been enforced, in some instances by the ladies; contributions for benevolent objects have been increased, and in Natick, South Natick, Marlboro', and Southville, conversions have occurred, while in Wellesley eight recent converts united with the church at the last communion. The towns of Hopkinton, Ashland, and Grantville have lost their pastors, whose places are yet unsupplied. The church in Dover has repaired and rededicated its chapel.

The Middlesex Union Conference reports five pastors settled and

one pastor dismissed. Additions on profession of faith have been made to the churches in Acton, Ashby, Groton, Groton Junction, Lancaster, and Pepperell.

In South Abington and Stoughton, of the Norfolk Conference, interesting revivals have taken place; and there has been increased attention to religion in Quincy. A systematic plan has been adopted for securing larger contributions to the American Board, and it is believed the churches heartily adopt and will endeavor to carry out the plans of the National Council. There is little evidence of the life of godliness in church members. The topic for discussion at the next meeting of the Conference is "The conditions of the abiding presence of the Holy Spiritin the churches."

The Pilgrim Conference reports a gentle shower of grace in Carver, resulting in the conversion of fifteen or twenty souls.

By the Suffolk North Conference, a remarkable revival is reported in the church in East Somerville. A large number, many of whom were quite young, and not a few of whom were heads of families, were hopefully converted. Special religious interest has been enjoyed in the Old South and Central churches, Boston, and in the Winthrop church, Charlestown, while conversions have taken place in other places. The members of the Central church have left their house of worship, and are erecting a spacious church on the Back Bay. The Old South, Boston, the First, Cambridgeport, and the Winthrop, Charlestown, have flourishing Mission enterprises. The last two support a missionary in connection with their operations. Pastors have been dismissed in Cambridge, Cambridgeport, and Medford; have been settled in Charlestown and Chelsea.

Every church in the Suffolk South Conference is supplied; all but two by pastors, and over one of these a pastor is soon to be installed. More than ordinary religious interest has been experienced by several of the churches; and it is believed that some scores of highly useful members have been added to them. The Eliot church in Roxbury has completed a spacious chapel, and holds in it an efficiently conducted Mission school, which has been much blessed. Within the last few weeks, the Berkeley street church has, at an expense of $3,000, completed and dedicated a pleasant chapel on Lenox street, for Mission purposes, and the Shawmut church is just finishing a fine, commodious brick chapel, at an expense of $10,000, $500 of which was given by an individual recently hopefully converted. Park street and Union churches have each, one or more successful Mission schools.

In the Woburn Conference, an annual Sabbath School Convention has been organized, which promises great good. All but two of the churches are supplied with pastors. The church in Carlisle has been

blessed with a revival, and most of the churches have rejoiced in some conversions. The causes of Benevolence and Home Evangelization receive usual attention.

The Worcester Central Conference has lost one pastor by dismissal. In a few of the churches there has been more than ordinary religious interest; but there has been no general outpouring of the Spirit in the bounds of the Conference. In December last, a Mission Church was organized in Worcester, which proposes to unite with the Conference at the next meeting. Since then it has more than doubled its original numbers, and that mostly by those admitted on profession of faith. On the coming day of prayer, this church of forty members proposes to raise $100, as its portion of the $300,000, in accordance with the recommendation of the National Council, to be raised for "Home Missions."

No revivals, but additions to nearly all the churches are reported from the Worcester North Conference. The majority of hearers in the sanctuary are unaffected by the truth. Here and there one is converted. Intemperance prevails. The Prohibitory Law is defied, though not, perhaps, as in some portions of the State. Sabbath breaking seems on the increase. People from the cities and larger towns who spend the summer months amid the hills, too often use the Sabbath as a day of recreation; and sometimes professed Christians are no help to the churches in whose neighborhood they sojourn. The rural churches need and would welcome their public testimony for Christ.

Such is the report of the state of religion within the limits of this Conference. We have been eloquently reminded of the grand spiritual enterprises which God's providence presses upon us; of the work in that glorious future, upon the threshhold of which we believe we stand to-day. But, it is not alone *our* work. It is also the work of Him, who never fails or is discouraged. It is the work of the Great Captain of our salvation, who has been lifted up upon the standard which we bear, that He might draw all men unto Him. We have also been clearly and forcibly reminded of what, as a body of believers, we owe to ourselves. But, what we owe to ourselves, we owe by an obligation infinitely higher and holier to Him. And the discussion on Home Evangelization has brought before us, as the great question for the coming year: 'Shall the sons of the Puritans, with the faith and polity of the Puritans, possess for their Master the land made sacred by their sleeping dust, and their prayers yet unanswered, but recorded on high?'

"Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."

There is a spirit of prayer and consecration attainable by the evangelical churches of this Commonwealth—can we doubt it?—which will exorcise those evils so prevalent in our borders, and which have been largely enhanced by the existence of the civil war just closed. With regard to this contest, the policy of Massachusetts has become the policy of the land. Beginning with Baltimore and Annapolis, she has always been at the front. In 1620, God put her at the front on this continent. He made her His standard-bearer in the civil and religious progress of the nations, and especially of the nations with which He intended to people this new world. Will she keep her divinely given position? Will she hear the ringing voice of her great Leader, FORWARD? Will she hold that fast which she has, that no man take her crown?

JEREMIAH E. RANKIN,
JOSEPH VAIL,
DAVID CHOATE.

REPORT ON HOME EVANGELIZATION.

THE Committee on Home Evangelization would respectfully submit the following REPORT:

This Committee received its appointment and instructions, under the following vote:

"*Voted*, That the Committee on Home Evangelization be continued during the coming year, with authority to employ a salaried agent, who shall investigate the field, and report fully to the next annual meeting of this Conference."

In the discharge of their duties, and after extensive inquiry, the Committee secured the services of the Rev. Daniel P. Noyes, for several years the junior Secretary of the American Home Missionary Society, to act for this Conference as its Secretary of Home Evangelization. In this selection of an Agent, the Committee considered themselves peculiarly fortunate. Mr. Noyes has a familiar and practical knowledge of this field, and the kind of Christian labor needed in it, that few possess. This, added to his deep interest in the work, and earnest desire to enter into it, made the Committee feel that they had been providentially favored in their appointment of him to the Massachusetts portion of this field.

While maturing this arrangement, the Committee held a conference with the Executive Committee of the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society, to secure their approbation, counsel and aid, in working a field so akin to the Home Missionary field of Massachusetts. The Committee of the Home Missionary Society cordially encouraged this undertaking of the Conference, and regarding the work as so affiliated to their own, they agreed to pay one thousand dollars toward the salary of our Secretary, and one-fourth his official traveling expenses; it being at the same time agreed on our part, that our Secretary should labor for them one-fourth of the Sabbaths in the year, and under their direction, in collecting funds for the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society.

In the appointment of your Committee, we were not empowered to draw on the Treasury of the Conference, nor did the Conference make any definite provision for meeting the expenses of its "salaried agent," by any vote or instructions. In an informal way the Committee were informed by the Conference that they might raise the necessary funds in any way they thought best, and presume on the endorsement of the Conference in so doing.

The Committee being thus left to their discretion in this thing, and not wishing to put another charitable agency directly before the churches for funds, specially as the amount needed was so small, they resorted to personal solicitation, to the use of about five hundred Circulars addressed to pastors in Massachusetts, and, in a few cases, to the presentation of this cause on the Sabbath.

The Committee are disappointed that receipts have not met expenditures. This failure is owing mainly to two causes. The amount needed was so small, that the statement of it could not create much sensation, or sense of responsibility among our churches, and so but very few of our four hundred and eighty-eight churches made collections for this cause. Another and stronger reason for the deficiency in our receipts lay in the new and comparatively unknown character of this enterprise of Home Evangelization. The common and traditional notion among our churches is that generally the field in question is well cultivated. That this Conference, therefore, should organize and systematize a process of labor for the more complete and thorough evangelization of Massachusetts, was such a novelty that the churches did not readily apprehend it. Nor do they yet. Of course they would not collect funds for an unknown enterprise. This cause needs only to be known by Christians of the Commonwealth, to secure easily all necessary funds, under some well digested plan of this Conference for collecting them. We would respectfully call the attention of the Conference to the deficiency in the treasury of the Committee, and ask them to adopt some means for meeting it, as well as for meeting the wants of the coming year.

The arrangement with the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society is not understood to be obligatory for more than one year, dating from January 1, 1865, and the same is true of the contract of the Committee with Mr. Noyes; though it is presumed that both can be continued at the will of the Conference.

The Committee desire to express very earnestly, their sense of the vast importance of this work. The great commission of our Lord was not to the world: "Go ye unto the church and receive the Gospel." It was a commission to the church: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." From the first, Christianity has been emigrating, invasive and proselyting. This is

its original, vital and true spirit. It was to go after the lost sheep; hunt for the lost money; and glean along highways and hedges for the guests of our Lord. So from the first it has gone where it was not invited; talked to those who did not wish to hear; made openings and opportunities where men intended that all should be adverse. It is constitutional for Christianity to go where it is not sent for, and to offer before it is asked for. So its promulgation is like its advent to the world. Beginning in a manger, because there was no room for it in the inn; getting hearings by the wayside, in private houses, and school-houses, and prisons even,—this was its method. Churches and parishes were not known in Apostolic times as indicating circles beyond which those included would not labor. Such types and habits are modern, and necessarily leave many territorially within these circles and in the interstices outside of them, to whom the Gospel is not carried or preached.

While the localizing and consolidating of religious interest in churches and parishes is eminently wise, and even indispensable to its highest success, these should be regarded only as bases of supply and fortified posts, from which onward, conquering and annexing movements are to be continually made. A church is rather for the distribution than the consolidation of religion, and membership should imply the obligation of evangelization outward, till the outgoing laborers meet those of adjoining churches.

The fact that from two to three-fifths of our population never go to any house of God, when mostly within comfortable distance, ought to be a painful and a reproving fact to the evangelical churches of Massachusetts. It cannot be doubted that the church is obligated through its members to carry the gospel to these voluntary absentees. Preaching the gospel by meeting-houses is not the end of obligation. A systematic provision of it by each church for every family and resident soul within its proper limits, would be a vast, but a legitimate and glorious work. It should be undertaken with the zeal, the consultation, the planning, the use of men, meetings, documents, social and genial influences, that are so earnestly and often so properly employed by citizens to carry an election.

It is to bring each church of our denomination in the State to this kind and measure of personal labor, that your Committee have been planning and hoping and pressing this cause. Perhaps our success for the year past has been as great as could be expected for a new enterprise, and in doing a work that a traditional notion and feeling have allowed the churches greatly to neglect, and not unfrequently let entirely alone. But we are persuaded that Christianity has not reached its maximum of power in interesting men personally in the gospel, when one half the population around and among the churches of

different orders are habitually and voluntarily absent from all of them. And we see no better way by which its power can be farther drawn out and applied, than for each church, systematically and thoroughly and continuously to carry the gospel to these absentees.

This new order of systematized Christian labor for those neglecting the common means of grace would doubtless gain an earlier and more general adoption, if it did not imply and require much personal labor from the pastors and churches adopting it. This scheme is an effort to secure greater personal activity among the members of our churches, for a certain class in the community. The labor requisite is self-denying, arduous, difficult, continuous.

And just here, your Committee would state the main difficulty in the way of success in Home Evangelization. It requires a higher tone of piety than is ordinary among us. It requires a tender fidelity to the Lord Jesus Christ, a quick sense of covenant obligation, a love for spiritual work, and a lively, prayerful anxiety to have sinful men saved, and God glorified in their salvation. The work to be done is the work usually done by the active portion of a church, during a real revival of religion; and the tone of piety needed is that which is most efficient during a revival. And we can not but feel that any church, having this work systematically and constantly in hand, would reap a reward in the constant elevation and activity of its own piety. Sometimes our churches need nothing more than this very work to bring them out of a depressed, useless, languishing state; because doing it is the primitive, normal state of the Christian church. And it is all the more serviceable to this end, in that it is personal and hearty work, in distinction from our organic and ceremonial Christian work, that the church confines to set forms and sacred places.

What and how much has been done in the eight months of labor covered by this Report, will be seen by the Secretary's Report, which he has made to the Committee, and which they, through him, would make to the Conference.

With the accompanying Resolutions,* in which the Committee suggest a mode of directing and sustaining this enterprise for the coming year, they respectfully submit their Report.

W. Barrows.
J. T. McCollom.
M. S. Scudder.
W. Thurston.
H. M. Dexter.

* For these Resolutions, as amended by the Conference, see page 13.

TREASURER'S REPORT ON HOME EVANGELIZATION.

DISBURSEMENTS.

To Cash paid Rev. D. P. Noyes, salary for 8 months, to Sept. 1st,	$1,333 33
Expense of removal from New York,	263 07
Official traveling expenses,	197 65
Rent of office in Boston,	12 50
	$1,806 55

RECEIPTS.

Collected from churches and individuals,	$514 44
From American Home Missionary Society,	716 10
	$1,230 54
Leaving a balance due the Treasurer, Sept. 1st,	576 01
	$1,806 55

E. O. E.

M. S. SCUDDER, *Treasurer.*

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF HOME EVANGELIZATION.

Presented to the General Conference of Congregational Churches in Massachusetts, at Haverhill, on Wednesday, September 13, 1865.

THE undersigned, having, in January last, entered upon the position of State Secretary of Home Evangelization, tendered him by the General Conference, through its Committee, respectfully presents the following REPORT.

Although the State of Massachusetts is better supplied with the institutions of the Gospel than most of the States, yet it has long been obvious that considerable numbers of its population are not directly reached by the stated ministrations of the Divine word. This fact has pressed painfully upon the consciences of many believers; and both ministers and laymen have often asked one another, What more can we do, than we are now doing? Such inquiries in this Conference resulted, last year, in the movement which now engages our attention.

As the present effort had its rise in a sense of the fact, that the people had not all been effectively reached by the Gospel; so its object can be viewed as nothing less than a *general popular Christianization*. The work is the work of the churches; and is exactly that for which they were Divinely constituted—to which their constitution was, by infinite wisdom, adapted. It is now proposed to secure—by help of that blessing from Heaven which we believe is waiting to be given—a more general activity of the churches throughout the State; and it may not be improper here to remind ourselves, that the method adopted by the General Conference, in furtherance of this last named end, is obvious and familiar; being in accordance with that common usage which has ever set apart particular times and persons to those objects which were esteemed of pre-eminent importance.

It is immediately apparent, that if we have here a work belonging to the churches, and demanding of them a new and greater activity, their attention should be particularly and effectively called to it: Furthermore, that if here is a general work in which every church has a

share, then it is indispensable that every church should distinctly recognize and adopt its share. Every one sees, that if a certain portion of the total population of the State, is within easiest reach of some particular church, it becomes that church at all times to know what the community is, for which God thus holds it responsible. Nor this alone; it needs also to understand how far its labors are reaching the souls intrusted to its charge—how far it is faithful or unfaithful—how far successful or unsuccessful. Hence, thirdly, the great importance of those "facts and statistics" which reveal to the churches their neglects, their mistakes, their failures, or their triumphs; furnishing, alike in all, new incitements to their Christian zeal, and valuable fruits of experience. These facts and statistics are of most value to the particular churches which they severally concern, though instructive to us all. Each church, with its pastor, needs the benefit of a regular and methodical examination of its field. This furnishes a kind of knowledge indispensable to a due comprehension of its work, and to a growing wisdom and fidelity in performing it; and is a means of grace. For their own good, therefore, if there were no further and public benefit, the churches ought to subject themselves to the toil and trouble of a regular and searching investigation of their parishes; and, so far from looking upon this as a useless task unreasonably thrust upon them, should regard it as a duty which they owe to the souls under their care.

But churches that have fully informed themselves respecting the work to be done, are often at a loss to determine the best methods of developing their whole strength in Christian labors; and in this matter, it is their privilege, fourthly, to aid one another with mutual counsels.

From the first, it was apparent, therefore, that in the very commencement of the work devolved upon your Secretary, he must aim at four results: *First*, to secure the better attention of the churches, to this great object, the thorough Christianization of the people: *Second*, to obtain, if possible, from each church, a recognition and adoption of its portion of the whole work—an acknowledgment of its responsibility to God, for the people of its parish; in other words, a practical acceptance of the principle of *church responsibility for communities*, with a definition, when not impossible, of parish lines: *Third*, a careful investigation *by the churches*, of the condition of their parishes, with reports of facts and statistics; *Fourth*, such a comparison of methods and consideration of the whole subject, as should diffuse the results of experience, and promote a sustained interest and a progressive intelligent zeal.

To the furtherance of these ends, it seemed indispensable that the churches should confer together upon the subject; and there appeared

to be no more promising way of making a beginning, than by securing a series of Church Conferences, devoted to the deliberate and careful consideration of the whole matter; in which Conferences, special effort should be made, after a detailed examination of the entire field covered by the churches then in council, to obtain,—or make arrangements for obtaining—from each one, a definition of its parish, with an adoption of the principle of church responsibility for communities, and to provide for annual reports of facts and statistics, from the churches, with such comparisons of views and results as might be expected to be useful.

Your Secretary has also understood it to be a part of his duty, to preach in behalf of this effort, as opportunity might offer, and, indeed to improve all proper occasions for promoting it. In accordance with a special arrangement made by the Committee with the Executive Committee of the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society, he has also preached in behalf of the Home Missionary cause.

It has been his privilege to attend twelve Conferences of Churches and three meetings of Ministerial Associations; besides preaching nearly every Sabbath and making frequent addresses, spending much time in consultation with pastors, and preparing and presenting a "Report on Parochial Evangelization" to the late "National Council." A larger number of Church Conferences could have been attended, had not several of these meetings happened together; a difficulty which threatens to prove a frequent and serious obstruction.

Your Secretary has everywhere met with the kindest personal welcome; and is grateful for this opportunity to make public acknowledgment of the friendliness and the courtesy which has been universally extended to him. He has also been greatly encouraged by the tokens of interest in the cause of Popular Christianization, on the part, not only of ministers, but also of laymen, and of churches and congregations. The interest appears to be general, and is evidently growing; and would seem to indicate, that this movement is by no means premature, but is commenced in God's time, and with his prevenient blessing. Feeling, as we all must, our absolute dependence upon Him who is our life and strength, it is peculiarly cheering, to be permitted to recognize, at the start, signs of the Divine approval. As it is impossible to over-estimate the difficulty of the task to which we are called, so it is with an altogether ineffable satisfaction and trust, that we, at any moment, feel ourselves supported by the mighty hand of God, free and joyful instruments of his will, agents of his sure decrees.

The Conferences of Churches, already referred to, were held, not for the gathering of facts and statistics, but solely for the four purposes which have been named. The first Conference was opened at

Springfield on Tuesday, the 17th of January last; and embraced all the churches of Hampden county, except those of Brimfield, Wales, and Holland. With a map of the county before them, the pastors and delegates present entered into an inquiry into the locality and condition of neighborhoods and districts, not at present reached by the stated ministrations of the gospel, with some notice also of those outlying *classes*, which, though within easy reach of the sanctuary, habitually neglect its privileges. The narratives were interesting and impressive. Many affecting facts were brought out. A number of outlying neighborhoods and districts were reported.

It was suggested to the brethren present, that the neglected neighborhoods should each be formally recognized, where possible, as belonging to the field of some particular church, so that such church should feel itself responsible for watching over it and doing for it all that could be done; and it had been hoped that the Conference would be able to lay before the churches a detailed plan for this division of labor. But so much time had been necessarily consumed in the narratives and discussions, that this was found to be impossible. Accordingly this matter was referred to the "Standing Committee on Home Evangelization," with instructions, to secure the visitation of every church (either by themselves or by brethren whom they might associate with themselves in this work) *and the apportionment of the neglected neighborhoods*, so far as practicable, *among the churches*. Any cases where this might prove to be impossible, were to be reported at the next Conference.

It will be seen, from the account just given, that the result of this first Conference was exactly what had been desired, so far as its action at the time was concerned. A deliberate survey of the field covered by the Conference, was made; a portion, at least, of the outlying districts and outlying classes, were named and described; a plan was agreed to, which, if adopted throughout the State, will bring every neglected district and class under the eye and hand of some church acknowledging responsibility for them, and seeking methods of reaching them effectively; and provision was made (or rather had been previously made, by the appointment of a Standing Committee,) for bringing the whole matter, annually, before a Conference of Churches, in a judicious manner; and to this Committee specific instructions were given, in reference to future efforts.

It would hardly be in place here, to make a detailed report of the facts brought out at Springfield. The "hill towns," on each side of the Connecticut valley, suffer a continual drain of emigration; which leaves many churches weak, and tends to multiply the number of outlying, neglected neighborhoods and districts. In several of these, efforts have been commenced, since the adjournment of the Confer-

ence, for reaching the population with stated religious influences. For more than a year, also, a county missionary—Rev. W. C. Foster —has been sustained by the Benevolent Society of Hampden County, and has devoted himself with zeal and with most gratifying success, to labors recommended, or approved, by the Standing Committee. There are other Counties in the State where, it is believed, a similar instrumentality is needed.

On the 31st of January, another Conference of Churches was held at Reading—the Woburn Conference. The same course was pursued here as at Springfield. The reports, though bringing to view several "outlying districts," showed, on the whole, a widely different state of things from that which prevails among the depleted hill-towns of Hampden County. The number of neglected neighborhoods is much smaller, and they are themselves inferior in size. Only two were reported, containing as many as forty families; and neither of these was two miles from church. In one of the two, special labors have been commenced, since the Conference.

The necessary division of labor among the churches here in consultation, was a simple matter; and was made in the following resolution: "*Resolved*, That the churches of our order in the several towns, consider the towns their parishes; and hold themselves responsible for all the "outlying populations in them." It should be said, that this resolution was, of course, understood as including only the Congregational and the neglected families, in the proposed parishes of the churches. Furthermore, where two or more churches, near together in the same town, draw their congregations from a common territory, that territory was meant to be recognized as their *joint parish;* for the benefit of which, the churches are expected to take counsel together, apportioning the labor, as circumstances may lead them to agree.

A Standing Committee was appointed, whose duty it is, to see that the subject is annually brought up, in judicious form, for consideration, and to conduct all needful correspondence.

On the 11th of February, a third Conference of Churches was held at Sheffield, at which were present ministers and delegates from the greater part of Berkshire South.

The reports were, in some cases, of great interest; the number of outlying districts appeared to be larger than in the territory covered by either of the other two Conferences. Some of them had been cared for; but some of the largest and most important were still neglected. On the whole, the picture presented by the narratives given, was well calculated to stimulate to prompt and earnest action. In the language (for substance) of the oldest pastor of the Conference, Rev. Dr. Gale, of Lee: "Berkshire County is a peculiar district.

The mountains present obstacles to intercourse, and hinder people from co-operating together, as they would, if communication were easier. There is much poverty. Many people, distant from church, have not the means of conveyance; and there is, consequently considerable neglect. But on the other hand, the County has certain important advantages. *It contains almost no organized error.* There is nobody rising up and saying, that it is not necessary to be converted; or, that there is no danger of losing the soul. There is indifference; but no organized opposition. The customs of the people are in our favor. Any minister can preach in any school-house, whenever he wishes. More than that, the people will come to hear. With due notice, you will generally have an audience. The people are accustomed to meetings. We, at Lee, have had four neighborhood meetings; reports of which, are presented at our Wednesday evening prayer meetings; and at this time also, the necessary arrangements are made for sustaining them."

The mountainous character of the country renders the determination of parish lines, and the assignment of outlying districts to particular churches, a matter of somewhat greater difficulty, in Berkshire than in Middlesex East; but this duty is now in charge of a large and able Standing Committee, to whom were also intrusted various important arrangements, that had been proposed during the discussions.

The account that has been given of these three Conferences, may suffice to make plain, to those who have not been present at any of the meetings devoted expressly to this subject, the general character and aim of their proceedings. Resolutions adopted at others, will be found at the close of this Report.

On the 21st of March, the churches of *Middlesex South* met in Conference, at Sherborn; and those of *Hampshire East*, at South Amherst, April 11th; on the 18th of April, the *Old Colony* Conference assembled at Marion; and on the 19th and 20th, the *Pilgrim* Conference, at Kingston; the churches of *Essex North* held a Conference at Newburyport, on the 25th of the same month; and those in the neighborhood of *Taunton*, at that place, on the 2d of May; the *Franklin* Conference, at Greenfield, on the 10th of May; and the churches of *Essex South*, at Manchester, on the 7th of June. At all of these meetings, the greatest readiness was shown, to unite upon any feasible plan for the promotion of the cause which we have at heart, and to welcome all friendly suggestions. The reports from pastors and delegates revealed very considerable diversities and even contrasts, in their different portions of the State, which we have not time here to review.

Your Secretary was also allowed the privilege of participating,—

although not in any official capacity—in a very agreeable and profitable Conference of the churches in the region of Brookfield, held at Ware, on the 16th of May. He was welcomed with great personal kindness; and much interest was manifested in the cause. No new action was taken; but excellent provision is already made, for an annual consideration of the subject.

He has likewise been present at a meeting of the *Essex North Association*, at two meetings of the *Franklin Association*, and at one of the *Berkshire North Association*; at all of which he was allowed liberal opportunity of making such statements as he wished. At the meeting last mentioned, provision was made for a special Conference of the churches of the northern part of Berkshire county, at which the subject of Popular Christianization should be further discussed. This Conference was held, and the discussion took place; but your Secretary was unable to be present. He has also been compelled to decline attendance at several other Conferences, both within and without the State; and with no effort whatsoever, to secure appointments, has been as fully occupied on the Sabbath as his health and strength have permitted. These particulars are mentioned as indicating the readiness of the public mind, to welcome the topic which it is his privilege to present.

By special invitation from brethren of Franklin County, your Secretary, after meeting with the Association, spent an entire week, in company with a member of their "Committee upon Feeble Churches," Dea. John Clary, of Conway, in visiting the hill country, on both sides of the Connecticut valley—preaching two sermons, making six addresses, conferring with the members of seven churches, and concluding with an extended consultation with the County Committee. The visit was an instructive one to him, and, he trusts, not wholly profitless to others. No brethren in the State enter more cordially into the endeavors now on foot for promoting a universal Christianization of the people, than those of Franklin County; and few are established in fields requiring a larger share of Christian energy and zeal.

On the whole, the investigations of the past few months have afforded satisfactory evidence of two things: First, that the religious condition of Massachusetts is far better than representations which are often made would seem to imply—is by no means inferior to that of other parts of the country; is probably fully equal, if not superior to that of any other State, and obviously far superior to that of any foreign land. But, secondly, there are many neglected corners, and much irreligious or *un*religious population. In a word, *a great work* is crowding itself upon the churches, a work of imperious and of even absolute necessity. We cannot expect to hold our ground, in religion

and morals, or, ultimately, in intelligence and freedom, unless we do this work well. And, by the help of God, we can do it, and we shall. We may hope that our example, if worthy of imitation, will not be without influence.

Some consideration of the method to be pursued, in furtherance of a more general Christianization of the people of this State, seems here imposed upon us.

The population of the State may be viewed, for our present purposes, as embraced in four classes—members of churches, or acknowledged believers, regular members of congregations, persons in some way loosely connected with congregations, and those who stand aloof from all the stated ministrations of religion. Each one of these classes again, may be subdivided,—and must be, in any exhaustive study of necessary instrumentalities and methods—into diversities of age, sex, belief, character and history. The question, how to reach all these diversities, involves an inquiry, not only into all the topics that come appropriately under the head of "parochial evangelization," but also into the religious influence of schools, of laws, and of the press; into whatsoever affects the tone of public morals or the general currents of sentiment and belief. For, obviously, against some of these agencies and tendencies, the churches have to strive, while others are their allies; all, therefore need to be observed and understood. Without this watchfulness and this knowledge, the churches can not be expected to conduct their whole work, with that comprehension and sagacity which are essential to their success.

It is important, therefore, that we *start with aims of a just breadth and reach;* that we both propose and describe to ourselves the real object of our endeavor, and, so far as we can, the whole object; and this especially in the *name* that we give to it; which being continually before our eyes and in our mind, and itself our standing appeal to the public, cannot fail to exercise an important influence upon the current of our thoughts, upon the measures that we adopt, and upon the popular feeling in regard to us. The name, "Home Evangelization," is vague in both its terms; "Parochial Evangelization," has the merit of greater precision, but the demerit, possibly, of narrowness and inadequacy. It does not tell the whole truth; for it is not true, that we propose to confine ourselves to the discussion of the details of parish administration. We aim at nothing less than to be instrumental in conveying the very spirit of Christ into the hearts of the people; so that they, being united to him, shall be reconciled with God. Why not say so, then? Why not declare that our object is—what it is—*the Christianization of the people.* The phrase, *Popular Christianization*, may be awkward, but it is true, and it is noble; it will ever

hold our minds to a noble goal, will help us to magnanimous and broad views and measures, and may, perhaps, do something towards attracting the favorable sympathies of the people. We shall deserve such sympathies if we honor the name. Its adoption need not shut out the appropriate use of other phrases, already mentioned.

Again: If the churches have a work, each church must know its particular part of that work, and ought formally and solemnly to acknowledge it. It is only by such a division of the labor, that any *system* is possible; that we can be sure that every part is looked after; that statistical reports are attainable: or that the churches can practically adopt the principle, of *church responsibility for communities.*

Should it be said: Our churches already know their parishes well enough for all practical purposes, we reply: But do they so know them, as duly to recognize their responsibility, as churches, for these communities? Have they in fact adopted the idea of such responsibility? Would it not, in many cases, obviously have a good effect, if the matter were brought before them, in church meeting, and they were, solemnly, with prayer, to acknowledge all Congregational and all neglected families and individuals within certain bounds, as placed of God under their Christian watch, and that, for all these souls, they must render account to Him?

It may be added, that, more than any others, those churches which are very near together—in country, village or city,—need this definite and solemn acceptance of a parish responsibility. For, more than any others, these are in danger, not only of forgetting that such a responsibility rests upon them, but even of falling into divisive and injurious jealousies. No one can doubt, that if the churches in Boston, for instance, had been in the habit of viewing that city as their *joint parish*, and, while retaining to the full their Congregational self-government, had contrived, nevertheless, to be always consulting, praying and working together for the good of all the people, those churches would now be more united and strong than they are. In fact, the practical adoption of the principle of church responsibility for communities, in this distinct recognition of a "parish," lies at the basis, and is the necessary beginning of any systematic effort, on the part of the churches, for a general popular Christianization.

Thirdly: If each church acknowledges a definite work, as its chief responsibility and privilege, then this object is worthy of engaging its *united prayer* and counsel; and it ought to set apart regular seasons for this special purpose. Thus only can it, as a church, join itself with the Lord in his work, or best call out, sustain and guide its own energies.

Fourthly: If each church has such a work, then this work deserves its careful study. As was elsewhere observed, it should methodically

investigate its field, whether it publishes the results, or not. The publication of such facts is often important, but not nearly so important, as the proper gathering of them.

Fifthly: Our churches are already in the habit of meeting regularly in conference. The greatest theme on which it is their duty and privilege to confer, is their own work. That this may be done to the best effect, it seems desirable that *Standing Committees* should have the duty of bringing it before them with appropriate reports, and in a duly considered method.

Sixthly: A similar auxiliary has already been provided for the General Conference of the Churches; but it is, perhaps, capable of being made still more efficient than it now is. If it be said, that all this is mere machinery, and that the great question is, how to do the work; it must yet be owned, that some arrangements are indispensable, when so many are expected to unite in one undertaking; and none will deny, we think, that the "machinery" proposed is not only simple, but is mostly somewhere in use, and can readily be put in use anywhere.

Turning now, however, to the question of *particular methods of labor*—it is at once apparent, that persons who must be reckoned non-attendants upon church may be viewed as of two sorts: those mixed in with the church-goers, yet constituting an *outlying class*, and those dwelling remote, in *outlying neighborhoods* or *districts*. We do not propose to say anything, at the present time, respecting the ways in which a church ought to try to do good to its own members, to its own congregation, or to the "outlying classes" in the vicinity of its sanctuary. The problem of reaching these classes is the most difficult one that we have to meet; and its discussion must be left to some future time. But surely, there is no excuse for allowing the existence of "*outlying neighborhoods*" and districts in such a State as Massachusetts.

Of these communities, there are two kinds; one—of which there are now but few—having sufficient population, if the people were united, to constitute a respectable congregation and church. In such, efforts ought to be at once commenced by those responsible for the field, looking towards the formation of a church. The other class, by many times the more numerous, comprises those communities not likely soon to be large enough for the maintenance of separate churches. These are either little villages or neighborhoods, or else sparse rural districts.

In the villages and neighborhoods, and in many of the rural districts, *Branch Sunday Schools* and *Prayer meetings* ought to be established; —reinforced with such visitation and distribution of Christian publications as may be found desirable. Where the people are so widely

scattered that their children cannot be gathered into a school, we may be able to employ no other stated religious instrumentality than a neighborhood prayer-meeting, circulating from house to house, with visitation and the distribution of papers and tracts; but there is no instrumentality more flexible or efficient. In many cases the attractiveness and the usefulness of these meetings would be increased, by securing the regular attendance of two or three persons of superior skill in singing. The hymns and tunes should be chosen with care, and pains should be taken to have them sung with true feeling. A worthy expression of real worship in song, is a very precious means of grace.

In some communities, "*Bible Readers*" may doubtless be employed, with excellent results. This agency is admirably adapted to all those populations that are not easily reached in other ways.

It is worthy of consideration, also, whether *praise-meetings* may not occasionally be adapted to secure the attendance of persons who obstinately stand aloof from all other religious assemblies. Let a few Christian singers, under the direction of their pastor or of some other competent person, select a series of hymns, with appropriate tunes, and let these be sung, with brief readings of Scripture or judicious remarks, between, and we have an instrumentality of great attractiveness and power; one, too, that could be adapted to a great variety of persons and conditions. We have not yet learned the full efficacy of this delightful service, of sacred song.

Time does not allow a further discussion, here, of the methods of Christian labor. They cannot fail, however, to receive the careful attention of the Local Conferences and the individual churches. All Christians who earnestly desire to work with the Lord, will be sure to be shown a way.

We have been speaking of a class of outlying districts which includes, as we suppose, the great majority of all in the State. But there are examples, not a few, of communities which, without being large enough to justify the organization of a church, are yet so large as to require some *regular public services, in addition* to those of the Sunday school and the prayer-meeting. What shall be done with these? The pastor at "the centre" is already overtaxed; and cannot take this additional burthen. And yet the burthen must be borne. The necessity is imperative, who shall assume it? The answer is at hand: Somebody else, whom the church and pastor shall appoint and direct. But who? Obviously, again, either some member of the church within whose parish this neighborhood falls, or a person from without its bounds. If the church contains a person of such intelligence, piety and gift of speech, that, by devoting his leisure to the

study of the Bible, and the reading of sermons and other religious works, he could, once a week, address the people, assembled in a school-house or chapel, acceptably and profitably, then the problem is solved. And we have in our churches a multitude of laymen who can do this—if they will give themselves to the endeavor with true earnestness. The pastor will be able to render occasional help, some portion of the people can be assisted to reach the church at the centre, and taking all these efforts into account, such a community might be considered as effectively reached.

If no person, however, can be found in the home church to act as a helper to the pastor, then one must be elsewhere obtained; for *we have no right* to suffer the people to live and die without the Gospel; and, what is money for, if not to do that good which is the greatest? There are, furthermore, cases, we doubt not, in which an educated minister should be engaged, to labor in *a circuit* of such outlying communities. We should not be surprised, if a number of such circuits were found to demand an immediate supply.

Again: In such regions as those of Berkshire and the river Counties,—a county missionary, if the right man could be found, would, for several years to come, render an altogether incalculable service. If any one is disposed to object, that all this is costly, we reply: It is what money was made for. We must tell the people, "The Lord hath need" of it. It will continue to be forthcoming, as long as needed, if we prove that we spend it well.

In view of the facts and considerations that have been presented, the following RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CHURCHES are respectfully submitted to the General Conference.

1. That every church, solemnly, by vote, with prayer and vows of consecration, recognize its work, and its field; where possible, marking out definitely the boundaries of its separate *parish*. Where two or more churches draw their congregations from the same territory, they are requested to recognize this as their *joint parish*, and statedly to take counsel together respecting it—appointing stated meetings for this purpose. In all cases, it is understood that the Congregational churches include within their own parishes only Congregational and neglected families; desiring, not to interfere with other denominations, but to labor in harmony with them.

2. That every church set apart one of their regular prayer-meetings—on the evening of the third Sabbath in every month, when convenient—to the church and its work among its own people; to be called *The Home Prayer-Meeting.*

3. That every church investigate its field and make *report of facts and statistics*, in accordance with the blanks furnished for that purpose in the Minutes of the Conference.

4. That efforts be at once made, in the *Conferences of Churches*,

(1.) To see that movements are promptly commenced, looking towards the formation of churches in all destitute communities large enough to justify such a step. (2.) To secure the apportionment among the churches of all outlying neighborhoods and districts. (3.) To press the immediate commencement, in all such communities, of some kind of Christian effort. (4.) To provide for the collection and collation of facts and statistics. (5.) To arrange circuits, where necessary. (6.) To consult upon the practicability of securing *lay helpers* for pastors whose parishes include branch congregations which the pastors are unable to serve with sufficient frequency. (7.) To appoint *Standing Committees on Popular Christianization* in furtherance of these and other similar objects.

It is suggested, that the scribes of the several Conferences be requested to bring these recommendations before the same—unless this should be done without their motion—and to report the views and action of the Conferences to the State Secretary, to be by him laid before the churches of the State through their next General Conference.

Another service seems now to be required of the present Conference. There is a need of further assistance in the effort to gather and diffuse the benefits of the common experience and the common wisdom. Your Secretary will be able, if necessary, to secure this additional help; but the General Conference can do it more effectively. If there were *a Committee, or Commission, made up of persons from all parts of the State*, meeting two or three times a year, and corresponding with one another in the intervals, as circumstances might dictate; assuming also, *all necessary financial responsibilities*, it would be likely to render most important service.

A Commission or Committee for the furtherance of Popular Christianization, might easily be created; to hold its annual meeting and present its report at some designated time during the yearly sessions of the Conference. Such an addition to existing arrangements seems to be necessary; and it might start with a certain advantage, if a result of the present consultations. The creation of such an instrumentality is respectfully referred to the consideration of the General Conference.

But now, in conclusion, let us remember that this work is all of God, and that only as we are in living union with him, can our measures be of any force. These all will be but a congeries of dead forms, and worse than useless, without the presence within them of that mighty power whereby the worlds were made, the informing Word and Spirit of God.

To every believer, therefore, we make appeal: *Enter into thy closet, daily.* And to all pastors: Call yourselves, and call the members of your churches to account, in this matter of secret prayer; and let there be such a tone of sentiment in the churches, as shall secure fidelity to this precious privilege of all children of God.

Furthermore: As the inward beginning of all good is in prayer, so the outward beginning of general church labor is properly with the children and *in the household.* Let us remind one another, therefore, of that precious duty, the consecration of children, in baptism, to the Lord, and their nurture in his love and fear. While endeavoring to make our methods as perfect as we can, let there be perpetual effort, on the part of believing households, as well as of individuals, for a ceaseless, vital communion with God and union to Christ.

We cannot too often remind one another, that the great obstacle to be overcome, is, not the sparseness of our border population, or the rooted obstinacy of errorists and neglecters, but our own indifference and want of faith. Once let the churches become established in a habit of Christ-like fervor and industry, and the mountains in their path will be removed. The difficulty that we are called first to face, is the greatest of all, and the question, *How to rouse the churches to such action as is needed,* is the main question in this whole matter.

We suggest to this inquiry a threefold answer. First, Get the churches all to *do something.* Second, Persuade the churches to regular *united prayer* in behalf of themselves and their work. Third, Let the ministers all *preach the Doctrine of the Church*—bringing into clear view its glorious nature, duty and destiny.

As the work is the work of the churches, so the true theory of it can be nothing else than the true Doctrine of the Church. If we are to inculcate the duty, we must preach the doctrine. If we are to rouse the churches to their proper action, it is not sufficient that we should give them good counsel in regard to petty details of labor, or should invent nicely fitting plans. We must renew in the breasts of all their members a deep veneration and affection for the holy and immortal society in which they are forever made one with Christ and with all the sons of God. Rejecting, with profound aversion and dread, as did our fathers, all secular and unevangelical views of the church—such as tolerate that forbidden "dominion" and "authority;" but cherishing, instead, the delightful sense of brotherhood and union together in Christ, of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and of perpetual service, and of present and of final triumph, as the body of Christ, whereby He works and conquers; let us give ourselves to be the friends of all men, speaking the truth in love, and through God's grace, abiding in that charity which 'suffereth long and is

kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth, hopeth, endureth, and never faileth.' Striving, in simplicity, to live the life of God, in these households of God, the churches, as members of his one blessed family, the glorious Church Universal, let us dare to hope that his household shall become more and more comely in the eyes of men, more and more powerful over man, fair and terrible, as an army with banners; and that year by year, it may be given to us, to be instruments of the blessed will of God, in advancing his kingdom here, so that the prayer of our Lord and the pious desire of our forefathers shall be accomplished, and *all the people acknowledge Christ.* "PREPARE YE THE WAY OF THE PEOPLE." "LIFT UP A STANDARD FOR THE PEOPLE." "AND THEY SHALL CALL THEM, THE HOLY PEOPLE, THE REDEEMED OF THE LORD."

DANIEL P. NOYES,
Secretary of Home Evangelization.

NOTE.

THE following Resolutions are given as expressing with clearness the general spirit of the Conferences, and describing in compact form the tenor of their action.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE MIDDLESEX SOUTH CONFERENCE, MARCH 21, 1865.

Resolved, 1. That this Conference cordially approves the plan of Home Evangelization upon which the State Conference has entered; whose special aim is, "to bring the neglecters of the sanctuary under the influence of the preached word." We extend a hearty welcome to Rev. DANIEL P. NOYES, the Secretary of the State Conference, to our meetings and to our several churches. We highly appreciate his suggestions, and approve his plans for the work of pastors and churches in behalf of absentees from the house of God. We deem this a work of great magnitude and importance, which should enlist the sympathies and prayers of *all* the members of our churches.

Resolved, 2. We respectfully but earnestly commend this work to our brethren of other evangelical denominations, as unsectarian and truly Christian. We invite them to go out with us into the highways and hedges and compel men to come in. We invite our churches to map out the field in each of our towns and parishes, and, when it is practicable, to confer together as to their limits in this work, that no part of the field may be unvisited or neglected.

Resolved, 3. That a committee of three be appointed, to receive from each of our churches, reports concerning the territorial bounds which they severally feel willing to accept as the limits of their fields of labor; and

that this Committee, having compared these reports, be prepared, at the next session of our Conference, to make such recommendations to the several churches, concerning the districts they should undertake to care for, that no portion of our territory shall be neglected.

RESOLUTION OF THE HAMPSHIRE EAST CONFERENCE, APRIL 11, 1865.

Resolved, That a committee of three be appointed, whose duty it shall be 1. To secure, if possible, from each church, a designation of the field which it feels bound to accept *as its parish*—in this sense: that it holds itself responsible to God, to do all that can be done, to bring the members of all Congregational and of all neglected families (within the specified limits) into living union with Christ. 2. To obtain from the several churches, reports of the condition of their parishes and of the progress of their work, and to embody the same in an annual report to the Conference. 3. To conduct any desirable correspondence with other Local Conferences and with the Committee of the General Conference.

ESSAY.

BY REV. ELIHU P. MARVIN, OF MEDFORD.

THE DUTY OF CONGREGATIONALISM TO ITSELF.

DUTY is that which is due; and that which is due depends upon relations. The relations of Congregationalism are to the kingdom of Christ in this world; and the value and greatness of that kingdom measure the duty of Congregationalism to itself.

Congregationalism is the New Testament religion embodied for its work. Like a living being, it exists and thrives by maintaining its simple naturalness, in opposition to all addition to its original doctrines, spirit and modes of action. It can encourage no denominationalism, no organization of churches into ecclesiastical bodies, any more than the religion of Christ can tolerate different religions. There should be no such concentrations of church power, no different denominations in the world, but simply local churches, each retaining independently all the power which Christ has given to his people, and all variously associating for mutual council and helpfulness. Congregationalism has a body, a form of administration and government; but this form is dependent upon the doctrines, the spirit, the life within it; as the human body is filled out, held in shape, carried and quickened by the life which is in it. Having a soul as well as a body, Congregationalism owes duties to itself in these its two relations; of form or body, by which it acts upon the world; and of spirit or soul, by which the body is carried and guided.

First, as to form or body, Congregationalism owes to itself not only existence, self-preservation, which is the first law of instinct, but also as divinely planned and authorized, and so the most natural, healthy and vigorous existence. This is of more consequence than many very charitable and active Christians have supposed. The soul, however wise and high its aim, can accomplish nothing in this world, without an organism to quicken and move. There must be a mould into which the spiritual life is poured. And if there be an organism and policy for the church life to act through, it must be divinely authorized and constituted. If God had not originally organized his church in

the family of Abraham, by giving his covenant to him and to all his spiritual seed, the "heirs according to the promise" of that covenant, who would dare to enter into covenant with God, or bind his people in so solemn a relation? Who would dare to invent a covenant, sacraments and ordinances? Hence it is this Abrahamic covenant in substance, ratified with Isaac and Jacob, and with every succeeding generation of believers down to the end of the world; and these sacraments, divinely modified at the beginning of the new dispensation for the purpose of meeting and marking the progress of the spiritual kingdom; it is this covenant in substance and these modified sacraments and ordinances which alone give constitution and authority for the organization of any and all real churches. And not more surely were these grand constitutional elements of church organization given of God, than were the few regulations and simple policy which were essential to the security and right use of those grand constitutional elements.

If it be said that the covenant, sacraments and a few general principles were given, and the form of church organization, with its general policy, was left to the choice, tastes and circumstances of different associations of Christians in different ages and countries; we reply, this is receiving but a part of the divine authorization and teaching. It is receiving what God has said and rejecting what God has done for our guidance. We are as plainly informed what God designed the structure and uses of the human body should be, as if they had been all written out in the Bible. It would be superfluous, and not like God, to write out what he has made plain in some other way. If a man would know what is the organism of the body, let him go to that body as God has formed and set it forth for our teaching. So of the organism of the church, both under the old and new dispensations, God constructed and set it forth complete and whole in its functions and working, as he would have it. What was done under the guidance of inspired Apostles, and recorded for our example, we as churches may do, in substance and spirit, and nothing more.

And here is our divine authority, both for doing such things and for refusing to go beyond, and to allow that the additions, inventions and improvements of men have any authority or force in the church, which is God's house. By the traditions of men, the church of God, as well as the commandments of God, may be made of none effect. A constitution or statute book may be as thoroughly corrupted and made void by additions as by subtractions. That two-edged, flaming sword which the Holy Spirit hung at the closing gate of the scriptural canon—"If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book"—was designed as much

to guard the pure and simple structure of the divinely constituted church, as it was to guard the doctrines, both of which are alike contained therein. Indeed the whole constitution and policy of Christ's church, form an important part of the doctrine to which we are to take heed, the original purity of which, in every age, is found to be the price of unceasing, heroic vigilance ;—for a large portion of the corruptions and abuses which have disgraced religion, have been the direct result of additions to the divine constitution of the church. The Romish ambition and corruptions, and all the various forms and degrees of hierarchal pretensions, and consequent division and strife, have flowed naturally from the insidious and plausible assumption that the constitution, forms and policy of the church may be largely of human choice and invention. Here is the crevasse in the divine embankment of the church, and the breaking forth of waters beyond control. For if the principle of divine limitation is once yielded, and human choice and invention begin to be admitted, who shall say where the limit shall be ?

Here, then, is the place of duty for Congregationalism. It should set a double guard at this gate, and of better mettle than Parley the Porter. Here it may be firm without being sectarian. Indeed firmness here is the only preventive of sectarianism and schism, for where the discipline of the eighteenth chapter of Matthew is the only discipline allowed, there is no room for authoritative combinations of churches, and consequent schisms and organized bitter and perpetual strife. But instead of this there will naturally spring up local churches, all equal and independent in ecclesiastical power ; and yet not independent in fellowship, but bound together in a common Christian watchfulness, a common spirit and work, and in sincere obedience to the wholesome advice and decisions both of the individual church and of the churches when gathered in councils.

It is the distinguishing and potent element of Puritanism to bow to, and only to, divine authority ; and it is but half-way Puritanism, not to include the form and policy of the church with the doctrines in that divine authority. The body and soul have a mutual influence and control over each other. If one suffer the other suffers also. Unquestionably the doctrines and spirit of the church can not be kept pure without keeping the vessels that hold them clean and whole. It is no more true that the assumption of power corrupts doctrine on a wide scale, than that a loose organization and policy yield and betray doctrines on a narrow or local scale. Frank honesty is ever ready to open its hand and heart to the eyes and counsel of a true and real fellowship, such as is provided in the New Testament, and is essential to the Christian spirit and economy. It is ever the self-willed or the

designing that seek the unrestraint, or the concealment, of an independency of mutual watchfulness and moral influence. It is the rejection of the divine constitution and policy of the church on this hand that has led on to the final rejection of inspiration, ending in refined rationalism or gross infidelity. But so long as Congregationalism performs its duty to itself in guarding jealously this characteristic and controlling element of Puritanism, we see not how it can much turn off from the King's high road, on the right towards formalism and popery; or on the left towards anarchy and infidelity.

The whole shaping and policy of the church being divine, has only to be followed with fidelity by the church to insure that its existence shall be the most natural, that is, simple, and so the most healthy, vigorous and successful possible. Why should we leave the divine, the natural, the living, for the human, the artificial, the dead? Nor should it be thought that these externals are of little consequence. Health, vigor, life, depend upon them. Their relations to the kingdom of Christ militant are intimate and vital. The force and vigor of the soul depend upon the health and management of the body. Even the mechanical powers, and the mightiest agents in nature, must act upon instruments, and are dependent upon the perfection and working of machinery. The difference between the skillful, enthusiastic mechanic and the bungling, discouraged drudge at the bench, is largely a difference in the keeping in order of tools. In every contest the consummate skill of James Fitz James will prove more than a match for the main strength of Rhoderick Dhu.

Hence Congregationalism owes it to itself that its few and simple ecclesiastical principles be made familiar as household words in all the churches. It is bound, by all its relations to the kingdom of Christ, to keep pure, simple, scriptural and respected, all ecclesiastical action, whether in churches or in councils. It should make sure that its church members, its ministers, its editors, its theological professors and all its doctors and great men think it no waste of time and not beneath them, to attend the business meetings of churches and coun cils, to gather in zealous crowds at the associations and conferences, both local and general, where, and so that, these primary, yet far reaching themes may be often opened and discussed with all possible wisdom and effect.

But in its interior, its life, or soul relation to Christ's kingdom, Congregationalism owes duties to itself which are even more important than those which have been mentioned. It is the soul which animates, and gives character and carriage to the body. As the soul depreciates, the joints loosen, the muscles relax, and the whole body halts and relapses. Let a hundred feeble-minded persons be sprinkled

promiscuously into a procession and you can readily distinguish them all by their gait and carriage as far as you can see them. This is the secret of the weak and beggarly appearance and results of all attempts to practice Congregationalism where the Christian doctrines and spirit have been vitiated or rejected. Under organizations with more imposing forms and ceremonial service, a loose or a false faith may long take shelter and seem to flourish. But in the simple practice of the New Testament church structure and polity, there is little or nothing which formalism, hypocrisy, or infidelity can desire. The inner faith and life are all that can make the outward being strong and attractive. If these are wanting, Congregationalism is, to a great extent, like the glorious Head of the church to the unbelieving world, but "a root out of dry ground." This is both another evidence of its divine source, and the reason that neither Unitarianism nor Universalism can be more than the mimicry of Congregationalism. The doctrines and spirit of Christ and the first Christians, the full soul of religious life, these are essential to Congregationalism.

Hence the greatest duty which Congregationalism owes to itself is to guard and cherish the vital forces of gospel faith and earnest Christian life. These two elements constitute the spring-head of Congregationalism. It was these, the strong and bold doctrines of grace, and warm, gushing religious life—it was these that made Congregationalism so single minded and so mighty in the days of the Apostles, and for a generation or two after the day of Pentecost. When these began to decline, and in proportion as they declined, Congregationalism became changed and corrupted by additions of men, and finally was well-nigh swallowed up like a life stream in the sands of a great desert which it had come to water, and which it might have made a rich and fertile land. It was these, furnishing a mighty power acting through a natural channel, that made Congregationalism so heroic and unconquerable with the Puritans in Old England, and so victorious and far reaching with their descendants in New England. The Puritanic, strong system of faith and high spiritual life, untrammelled by the clumsy, traditionary additions of men in its outward manifestation and working, must in the divine economy ever be absolutely unconquerable and ultimately triumphant. It has the divine wisdom for guidance and the divine life for endurance; the courage and tenacity of purpose to "fight it out on this line" for ever, rather than that the "gates of hell" should prevail against it. But the two must not, can not be separated without failure. Rather we should say, the three can not be safely separated, the apostolic faith, the apostolic spiritual life, the apostolic church policy, a three-fold cord which, while braided together, can never be broken.

It follows that Congregationalism owes it to itself to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once [ἅπαξ, wholly, once for time] delivered unto the saints." We have often been astonished at the readiness of some Congregationalists to yield, partially at least, several of the great doctrinal facts which are essential to the Puritan system of faith, for the sake of union with various denominations, and consequent enlargement. Just as if Congregationalism could be retained without retaining its system of faith. It is in reality a willingness to change Congregationalism into something else for the sake of making it large. It is the simple elements in nature that are strong and indestructible; amalgams, pudding-stones, are weak and always liable to fall to pieces, and are very unsafe foundations to build upon. To cling to the scriptural policy, as to the scriptural faith, and yield to nothing else, is not sectarian; but is the true antidote to all sectarianism and denominationalism. But to be so enamored of the policy, the form,—or rather to be so enamored of a kind of Babel enlargement as to be ready to yield life and soul, which alone can fill out, animate and carry the form, is to be on the very high road to sectarianism. It would compass sea and land to make proselytes, and when they are made they are at least tenfold less Congregationalists than they were before.

Moreover, to give up the apostolic faith in any degree, is in that degree to give up the apostolic life. A "dead orthodoxy," if there is in reality such a thing, is better than nothing. It is, by the hypothesis, something. It is the essential foundation. But a spiritual life without a substantial orthodoxy is an absurdity, a nonentity. The idea is a reproach to the God of truth who has declared that "they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." There can be no other right conception of religion than that of right views producing right feelings and action. Nor are we in this at all inconsistent with the action of the late National Council. We would have Congregationalism generously coöperative for certain benevolent purposes, and in certain temporary emergencies, with all those who do not fatally reject the gospel. We would have a special basis of doctrine to guide us in such coöperation. But this should never lead us to relax in the least the great historic system of faith, which the church has wrought out through outward and inward struggles and experience for many centuries. The past surely is secure; and however great the progress yet to be made, it cannot be a progress of departure from that which is passed of the hidden life of Congregationalism, and which has largely characterized it, and made it what it has ever been.

It only remains to speak of the duty of Congregationalism in retaining and increasing that spiritual life which we have seen to be so essential a part of itself. The particular duty is, not that of retaining

and increasing the religious spirit in general—not that higher Christian life is needed in the churches and their individual members, however true and important this may be—but that this spirit and life be infused into Congregationalism as a government. Its whole organization and policy need to be enlivened and controlled by a fervent, working piety. All its ecclesiastical business and meetings should be brought into close and constant connection with the great work which the Lord of the church has given her to do. Jesus Christ gave the work of converting the world into the hands of his church, and with this work all his covenant promises, and pledged, efficient help stand connected. So the Apostles and early Christians evidently understood the great commission, as they went forth organizing churches everywhere, and operating through them directly upon the world. It is said of Paul and Barnabas, when they set out for Jerusalem to take counsel of the Apostles and elders, that they were "brought on their way by the church." And when they were come to Jerusalem "they were received of the church." Moreover, their council of Apostles and elders possessed the wisdom and delegated authority of the churches, and acted by virtue of the same. Such is the intimation in all their home and foreign missionary work. But among us how little the church, as such, has to do with the great benevolent organizations and plannings of the age! How few councils of the churches are called to hear reports from missionaries, and decide their difficult questions and give them fresh instructions in the voice of the Master speaking through his living body, the church! Voluntary societies have arisen to stand in colossal shadows between the churches and the affecting and inspiriting work of rescuing perishing men. Of course these voluntary societies gather around them and absorb the spiritual interest which was designed for the churches in their necessary ecclesiastical maintenance and meetings. Hence all the efforts, in our various Conferences of churches, associations and larger councils, to bring in essays, discussions and various religious services, that the interest and life which are felt to be wanting, may be, in sufficient measure, restored to sustain these organizations. The life and interest which would flow in naturally, we have very much shut out from our gatherings by separating the great benevolent operations which, without any effort, thrill Christian hearts and sway the multitudes, from the mere routine of necessary business, retaining only the latter to ourselves.

How long would there remain any of that deep, often excited interest in the business meetings of railroads and manufacturing companies, if the election of the officers, the direction of the laborers, the controlling of the funds, the hearing of reports from the fields occupied, the

discussion and inaugurating of new enterprises, were all separated from the mere business routine of keeping up the visible and statutory organization! The mere keeping in repair and running the machinery for its own sake is intolerable. But even the filing of the saw may become deeply interesting when the filer witnesses the splendid work which it performs and has the motive of large pecuniary results to cheer him. What if all that interest which will be manifested in the faces of the thronging thousands, who will in a few days press to the annual meeting of the American Board, could be gathered around our annual Congregational meetings! Would there be many vacant seats here, or many appointed messengers of the churches remaining at their homes? And yet a large share of the funds and the interest consequent upon the appropriating of those funds, have sprung up, like fountains, from the churches here represented, and could not have existed without the maintenance of our ecclesiastical organization and life. But in addition to this, what if all the interest which our contributions create in home missions, in elevating the freedmen, in organizing Sabbath schools in waste places, in sending abroad religious tracts and books to the millions, were added to, and became an important part of our annual ecclesiastical meetings? How greatly would all this increase the spiritual life of Congregationalism, filling out its forms with soul and grace and power, in all its carriage and motion.

There need be here no fear of ecclesiastical centralization and the usurping of the functions and powers of the churches. The very opposite must result. As we propose no ecclesiastical boards and no corporations, close or otherwise, to stand between the churches and their work, the result would be that the local churches would recover their lost powers and ecclesiastical life together. It would throw upon them all ecclesiastical power, and work the increase of conscious responsibility, benevolence, and zeal in the individual churches. If it be said the Congregational system is not strong or compact and concentrated enough for such work, we reply, this is just what many have said of Congregationalism as a government. But if it is sufficient for all purposes of government, it is for all purposes of benevolent work. It is not a weak but a mighty organization.

We do not deny that several voluntary and coöperative societies might still be needed. Nor is this the place to attempt any outline for the practical accomplishment of the end in view. The aim now is to show that Congregationalism owes to itself the addition of all this interest and spiritual life to its working organism. Our need being really felt, and our aim once in the right direction, all the rest might be safely left to the providence of God and the pliant adaptability of our system. But this much is certain, that Congregationalism owes

to itself distinctively and amply Congregational organization for benevolent action in all the leading departments of Christian effort; and this organization should be under the responsible direction of the local churches. It should rest directly on the churches with as little separate action and machinery as possible. The work and success which it accomplishes should be the work and success of the churches as directly and manifestly as the results of councils are the acts of the churches. It is due to the self-preservation and efficient action of Congregationalism that it have a Tract and Book Department in its own interest, and under its own management. It should be a society of itself by which to carry Congregationalism to the Freedmen and to all the South. It should in due time become both a Home and Foreign Missionary instrumentality for carrying the policy, faith and life of Puritan power through all our broad national domain, and to the nations that lie beyond.

With such views and experience of Congregationalism as we possess, how can we justify ourselves in furnishing funds to be employed in such unions as utterly shut out Congregationalism, if not also in building sectarian engineries to resist our own future progress, and to stand in the way of laying broadly the only possible basis of ultimate Christian union? Have we not learned by the past that Congregationalism must take care of itself, or it will not be cared for? And it may be that the rapid multiplication of voluntary societies, and their management for their own interests rather than for ours will soon compel us to decided action. How shall a stand be made against the duplicating and multiplying of societies not responsible to the churches, and the consequent confusion and waste, unless it be by the churches taking their own work into their own hands?

ADDRESS.

BY PROF. EGBERT C. SMYTH, OF ANDOVER.

THE DUTY OF CONGREGATIONALISM TO ITSELF.

THE phrase by which the Provisional Committee have defined the subject now before the Conference,—*The Duty of Congregationalism to itself*,—denotes the obligation which rests on Congregationalists to maintain and develop the Principles of Congregationalism.

The form in which the subject is presented, is felicitous. It reminds us that we have to consider a question of *Duty* to the Polity whose blessings we enjoy; the Duty of adhering to its characteristic principles, and, so far as in us lies, of seeing that they are consistently carried out and applied. We have something else in hand than the task, however pleasurable, of eulogizing Congregationalism.

The subject itself, also, is timely. Questions of ecclesiastical polity are subordinate to questions of religious life; yet the former are never unimportant, for this, if for no other reason, that they are intimately associated with the latter. Mere forms (indeed *mere* anything) are worthless. *Mere* questions of ecclesiastical procedure, are flat and unprofitable. But when the form is a body, when the questions are those of an organism, nothing pertaining thereto is unimportant. It is also evident that, from various causes, public attention is now more than usually turned to that form of ecclesiastical Polity which is our inheritance. Men are asking '*What are its distinctive characteristics?*' They are often urged to accept it, and they wish to know definitely what it is. They see many good fruits, and they see some things which have a less favorable aspect. They desire to know whether the sweet waters and the bitter come from the same fountain, and what is the fountain.

It is not enough to reply by stating some general principle which is accepted by Protestant Christendom. It is not enough to quote from the writings of John Robinson, and to adduce the early practices of a solitary church, struggling for the right to exist. Congregationalism has not sprung, Minerva-like, from the brains of any one man, or from the usages of any one church. It finds its germinal principles in the Scriptures. It recognizes the supreme authority of the inspired Word. But as an existing system it has had a growth. Its princi-

ples have become usages. Its interpretations of Scripture have been translated into acts. Its understanding of the Apostolic pattern of ecclesiastical order and government, has found expression in hundreds and thousands of churches, managing their affairs upon a common and intelligible theory of operations.

To understand and interpret Congregationalism, we need to review its history, and to acquaint ourselves with its usages,—the usages which are the practical illustration and application of its principles, and therefore as much a part of the system as anything which can be predicated of it.

Looking at the subject in this light, it is evident that Congregationalism is not Independency. The first treatise generally recognized by our churches as an exponent of their form of Church order, was Cotton's 'Keyes.' This was published in London, with an Introduction from the two foremost champions of Congregationalism in England, Thomas Goodwin, and Philip Nye. In their Address to the Reader, they endorse, with evident exultation, Cotton's Treatise, as setting forth the "Middle-way between that which is called Brownism, and the Presbyteriall-government, as it is practiced." The Congregational way was born as a middle way. Its distance from Presbyterianism is often enlarged upon. It is at least equally distant from Brownism or Independency.

This distinction is not to be found in the fact that Congregationalism recognizes the propriety of churches asking advice of each other. Robert Brown advises this. All Independent churches recognize such a propriety, and in theory, certainly, do not mean to be wanting in any of the duties of courtesy. No distinction worth mentioning can be found here.

Nor does the distinction rest upon any mere difference of usage. As matter of fact, Congregational churches consult together, advise each other, perform certain acts in a more coöperative way than the English Independent churches, or than the Baptist churches in this country. But if all this is mere usage, Congregationalism is not "That very Middle-way" which rejoiced our fathers, and cheered Goodwin and Nye in their strenuous conflict with Presbyterianism.

Two principles meet in Congregationalism and are at one. The distinctive peculiarity of the system is—not the holding either of these separately, or both side by side; but the holding both in one system. Any statement of either principle, which makes it inconsistent with the other, is a false statement; I mean, an uncongregational statement. Congregationalism aims at comprehending both in harmony.

The two principles are, in brief terms, The Distinctness and Equality, and Self-Government of local churches; and The Fellowship

or Communion of Churches. If Congregationalism has contributed anything distinctive to the settlement of questions of Church polity; if it has any thing peculiar to itself; anything characteristically its own; if our fathers added anything to what other good men before them had worked out by prayer, and study of God's word, and experience of life, it is the embodiment of these two elements in one definite and operative system. What this embodiment is may be readily seen in these definite statements of the Cambridge Platform: "Although churches be distinct, and therefore may not be confounded one with another; and equal, and therefore have not dominion one over another; yet all the churches ought to preserve church communion one with another, because they are all united unto Christ, not only as a mystical, but as a political head, whence is derived a communion suitable thereunto." The difference between Congregationalism and Independency is here clearly set forth.

Congregationalism emphasizes the political headship of Christ. It deduces therefrom a communion of churches. It makes this communion a matter of sacred duty. No church has a right, abstract or concrete, express or implied, no right of any sort, to live and act as though Christ designed that there should be on earth a mere aggregate of independent churches. Fellowship is a duty. The churches have one political Head, are distinct members of one body—are equal subjects and parts of one visible kingdom. Because they are thus united to Christ, not as a mystical, but as a political head, they ought to preserve church communion one with another. If a church exists alone, as did the Plymouth church for a number of years, it must act by itself. If the life is extinct in other ecclesiastical organizations, it must act by itself. But this is upon a different principle than that of an inherent right of a church to act independently of other living and true churches, which equally with itself belong to the one kingdom. Congregationalism separated from Brownism or Independency is the adoption and enunciation of this duty of fellowship growing out of Christ's political headship. It is a distinction based on a principle, not on a mere custom.

Congregationalism separates from Independency still further, through its provision of appropriate agencies of fellowship. It not only recognizes the obligation of church communion, but supplies the needed instrumentalities. Independency recognizes the duty of neighborly courtesy, and consequently can speak of various *acts* of courtesy. Congregationalism provides *organs* of fellowship. It starts with fellowship as a duty, and organizes on this basis.

One of these organs is the Conference. John Cotton, who did more than any other man, it would seem, to unfold the principles of Congre-

gationalism, embraced Conferences of Churches as a part of the system. Where his conception has been most fully realized, the worth of the Conference is most highly prized. It is the agency through which churches in fellowship coöperate in advancing the kingdom of Christ. All of the educational and benevolent enterprises of our churches may be connected with such an agency. I do not consider the expediency of this. I only notice the capacity of the system thus to enlarge itself.

Another—or rather—*the* other of these organs, is the Ecclesiastical Council. As the Conference is made up of churches in fellowship, the Council exists distinctively for fellowship. If churches ought to be in fellowship, they ought to determine with whom to have fellowship. The Congregational method is to determine this through the medium of a Council. A recent clear and instructive writer on this subject, Rev. Prof. Harris, D. D., of Bangor Theological Seminary, has presented this as "the fundamental idea of the Council," "that it is the agency by which the churches determine with whom they will be in fellowship as Christian churches." For our present purpose it is enough to consider Councils solely in this light. It is by providing this definite method of determining all questions of fellowship between churches, that Congregationalism is distinguished from Independency. Not that Independency does not recognize Councils. It does. But it makes them purely advisory. It calls them to consider questions which it holds are so committed to the decision of each local church, that no ecclesiastical body other than the local church can decide them. Congregationalism recognizes a large class of questions not committed solely to each local church—questions which no one church in and of itself can decide. These are questions of fellowship. Such questions arise when any association of men asks to be recognized by the churches as a church of Christ; when a church proposes to ordain a pastor; and, in general, whenever common interests of ecclesiastical order are involved. No one church is competent to decide in such matters. Yet they are not questions of mere advice. A decision is what is needed. And there must be some common agency of the churches through which such a decision may be obtained. This agency Congregationalism has employed for this end from the beginning. Independency does not have it for such a purpose.

These two features of Congregationalism—its recognition of the obligation of fellowship on the part of the churches of Christ—and its provision, as an integral part of the system, of the agencies requisite to decide questions of fellowship, and to enable the churches to coöperate in Christian labor, are the most marked signs which distinguish it from Independency.

There are others less obvious, but real, which I pass with a word. Congregationalism affords protection to a minority, as Independency does not. It provides some safeguards against heresy, which Independency does not. It cultivates, by the total impression of the system, enlarged views of the kingdom of God, as Independency does not. It embraces organic agencies, as Independency does not. The latter is the fruit of an intense individualism. But men are born into families and nations and states. It is noticeable that Congregational churches recognize Infant Baptism as a Christian ordinance, while nearly all of the Independent churches in this country reject this ordinance. Congregationalism recognizes, in its full significance, the Family—as it does the one family and household of God.

There are various reasons which make it important that Congregationalists should emphasize, at the present time, the chief peculiarity of their system of Polity. If there is this clear and broad line of demarcation between Congregationalism and Independency, let it be made distinct, so that men shall not mistake it. This is due to the memory of the men by whose studious and reverent study of God's word, and self-sacrificing lives, the system has been established. Massachusetts surely should never be forgetful of John Cotton, and the men who framed the Cambridge Platform.

It is due, also, to the principles of Congregationalism. Between all systems of polity which are in any measure scriptural, the points of agreement will be more numerous than those of disagreement; just as between any two men, there will be, in spite of contrasts, a common nature deeper and broader than all else. What we have in common with other evangelical denominations is our best treasure. Yet it is by the wise and faithful maintenance of what is distinctive, that we may hope to contribute to the general good. We must give not only of what we have, but according as the Lord hath blessed us. That which we have to give, and ought to give, is the doctrine and the example of churches, which, while Congregationally organized, recognize in its integrity the law of fellowship. This is especially incumbent at the present time. If Congregationalism is to occupy the position its friends desire, it must be first of all true to itself. The times are rife with thoughts and efforts for union. We see national conventions representing the great commercial, political, social interests of the country. Politically the history of the country has been a constant progress towards a closer union.

There were, as Dr. Palfrey instructs us, among the earliest settlers of New England, men who coming here fresh from the conflict for the rights of the local church, attempted to carry out logically the principles of Independency. They believed, also, that the scriptures afford-

ed a perfect manual of government, civil and ecclesiastical. Three churches were planted, and three towns. The churches were absolutely independent, and the towns were absolutely independent.

The scheme was found to be absolutely impracticable.

First, the towns united and formed a colony. Then the colony united with the three other colonies. Then the colonies confederated. Then there was the "more perfect Union." Then came four years of war, in which the principle of absolute independency has been extinguished in an ocean of blood.

The union which is proper between the churches of Christ, must be according to their nature; not governmental in its origin or object, but communion. With all due limitation, the analogy remains. The history of the church shows an intimate connection between civil and ecclesiastical forms of polity. If Congregationalism be emphasized as a system of individualism and independency; if its historical endeavor and its achievement in no small degree, to exhibit a scheme of church unity which does not sacrifice the rights of the churches, be overlooked or undervalued, so far the system is put athwart the main, strong, deep current of our national history. I believe such a representation of it is radically erroneous. I believe, equally, that it is a great mistake as matter of policy. It is an impossibility that any ecclesiastical system can obtain here an ascendancy at all commensurate with our nation's greatness, in which the centrifugal forces are stronger than the centripetal. Resolve Congregationalism into Independency; teach that the latter is substantially the same with the former; and Episcopalianism, or Presbyterianism, or some system which can embrace the ideas of unity and fellowship in unity, will have supreme sway, or else there will be a chaos.

We hear much of severe censure bestowed upon Congregationalists, New England men, who are serving as teachers and pastors in the Presbyterian denomination. The increase and power of the latter system is ascribed, in no small measure, to the alleged infidelity of Congregationalists to their principles. Let all "faded Yankees" be scourged as they deserve. I have no apology to offer for men who are ashamed of New England. But I deem it a perilous method of reasoning, to affirm that a denomination, which is nobly serving Christ in this land, and whose history has been one of honorable and successful evangelical labor, has been built up by accessions of men unfaithful to principle. Men of common sense do not accept railing accusations, even when designed to promote a good cause. No. Presbyterianism has been served because of higher motives than any known to men who can desert a principle. I will not undertake to designate these motives. Yet there is one noteworthy instance, so far

removed in the past that I may allude to it without misapprehension. "I have long been perfectly out of conceit," once wrote the man whom of all others our New England churches most delight to honor, the elder Edwards: "I have long been perfectly out of conceit of our unsettled, *independent*, confused way of church government." We may be sure of this, that the more that Congregationalism is pressed out of its true line of movement, the more it is assimilated to an independency in which the centre and circumference are one—the more will men be out of conceit with it.

There is a lesson of history which seems sometimes to be overlooked. There was a time, in the history of New England, when not an imaginary but a real danger threatened the liberties of our churches. There was a time when Presbyterianism, and even a *jure divino* Presbyterianism, was contending for the possession of New England. It was in the ascendancy in the mother country. It aimed at universal sway. There were on the banks of this river men who favored its adoption by our churches. These churches were in all doctrinal matters at perfect accord with the Assembly at Westminster.

How did the men, whom we so often eulogize, meet the crisis? Not by urging the rights of local churches—not by blazoning on their banners Independency—but by rejecting even the word—by calling a Synod—by remaining without dissolution as a Synod two years, and by adopting, and putting in practice a Platform, whose chief historical distinction is its development of the principle of church communion, into definite and practical agencies, usages, and rules. It was this which shut Presbyterianism out of New England; because with such a system Presbyterianism is not needed. I may be in error, but it is my conviction, that if *now* the wise policy of the fathers were more generally imitated, and there were blazoned on every Congregational standard—*The Communion of the Churches—Congregationalism, not Independency;* the cause we cherish would be lifted above very much of the misconception and prejudice now adhering to it.

It is not, however, for the sake of denominational growth alone, nor chiefly, that such a policy is of consequence. The maintenance, and especially the practical illustration, of a visible union of churches, organized in accordance with the teachings of the inspired Word, is intimately connected with the progress and triumph of Christ's kingdom. The coming of that kingdom, though without observation, is not without visibility. The dream of the early church, of a visible unity, was not all a dream. The longing of earnest men in all ages for a manifestation of the oneness of believers in Christ, is not to remain unsatisfied. Piety tends to expression. The invisible Christians, as Schleiermacher has said, are after all the only really visible

ones. Piety tends also to union. A visible union of churches, their fellowship in doctrine and labor, is something desirable, nay most devoutly to be desired. Congregationalism, of all systems, seems—on so broad and difficult a theme we may best speak cautiously—seems to offer the only practicable method whereby such a union can be secured. It renounces all constraint. It relies on moral and spiritual agencies. Yet it emphasizes the one visible church. It sees it organized in local churches, each responsible for its own domain, yet bound to every other in a system capable of extension over the world.

Behold how these brethren in Christ love one another in Him, and covenant together to observe His ordinances, and promote the honor of His name.—Behold a church. Behold how these churches of Christ, recognizing Him as their Head, hold fellowship one with another, and co-operate in advancing his cause.—Behold the visible kingdom which is to fill the earth.

I have said it is our duty to develop, as well as maintain, what is characteristic in our system. It is not an effete, nor decaying system. It is full of life. Robinson saw but a small part of its greatness. The Cambridge Platform is a step onward. But the last Council, through its Committee, proposes to secure something better still. Let us heed John Robinson's advice, when he predicted that more light was to break from God's word, and see that our progress be along the line of truth, and in harmony with Providence. If the endeavor more and more fully to realize the idea of union with local freedom, has been the mainspring of our political progress, and no less the energizing law of our ecclesiastical history, let us see to it that the doctrine and practice of church fellowship receive that new enforcement and illustration which the wants of our churches, and the opening future demand. Let us recognize fellowship, on the part of all true churches of Christ, as a duty which cannot be left undone without disloyalty to our King. Let us use the agencies appropriate to such fellowship. Let our Local Conferences be sustained. Let this State Conference be maintained, and more and more intimately connect itself with the common interests and work of the churches of this Commonwealth. Let Councils have and keep their proper place; not attempting to exercise the prerogatives of the local church, yet sacredly guarding those interests which they are mainly instituted to protect. And let us avoid the misconceptions which arise from describing their action as in all cases "only advisory." I know the value of the words—'Councils are only advisory.' I know there are cases often submitted to Councils, in which such bodies can only advise, and the attempt to do more would be a usurpation. I know also that the phrase has something of the dignity which the old king's arm, hanging over our

father's, or grandfather's mantel piece, had for us as boys. But we did not take it down when summoned to fight rebels against our free government. We did not think it necessary, even in argument, in these later days, to defend the lawfulness of rebellion. The rights of our churches are secured. The famous dictum,—Associationism leads to Consociationism; Consociationism to Presbyterianism; Presbyterianism to Episcopacy; Episcopacy to Roman Catholicism; and Roman Catholicism is an ultimate fact,—remains without a single historical illustration. More truthfully might it be said—Family Government leads to Patriarchal, Patriarchal to Monarchical, Monarchical to Imperial, and the Empire is Despotism—therefore have no family government, and let young America have full swing. A Council is but a creature of the churches, summoned for a special purpose, and then dissolved. The danger of its destroying the liberties of the churches is of the sort experienced by the passenger on the canal boat drawn by mules, who trembled at every lock lest the boiler should burst. Councils are only advisory where advice only can be given, in cases where the local church is made ultimately responsible by Christ the one Lawgiver. But there are many questions of fellowship, in which the established usage of our churches recognizes their decisions as determinative and final. A body of men ask to be recognized as a church of Christ. The neighboring churches are represented in a Council, called to consider the case. The Council acertains that the supposed body does not admit into its creed any distinct recognition of the Deity of our Lord. It decides not to proceed to the proposed organization. Is this mere advice? To whom is the advice given? To the Association that invites? Suppose this body declines the advice—Are they then recognized? If not, has not the Council decided this? Or is it advice to the churches represented in the Council? Not so in practice. The act of the Council is always deemed decisive. Not so in theory. The real question before the Council is this—'Will the churches in fellowship, represented in Council, receive to their fellowship the supposed Association as a church of Christ.' No one church, in its individual capacity, can receive into such a fellowship. This must be the common act of the churches in fellowship—an act performed by them, either in mass meeting, or representatively. The latter is the established method, and the Council is the agency. And in such a case its voice is not compulsory, not advisory, but determinative.

We have dropped many phrases of the past in theology, because they were often misunderstood. When Councils are said to be "only advisory," the common understanding is apt to be, that in questions of common interest, where the purity, peace, and harmony of *many*

churches are concerned, each church can give to itself the autocratic law, accepting, or not, as it pleases, such advice as may be tendered. This has not been the intent of our best writers. This has not been the usage of our churches. Let us conform our language to the true principle of fellowship, and to consistent usage.

Councils are not for government. They have not magisterial nor legislative power. Councils are in certain cases, which may be clearly defined, only advisory bodies. They give advice, and fellowship is not broken if the advice is not followed. But above and beyond all this is their function as the appropriate and the only agency known to Congregationalism, whereby fellowship, ecclesiastical and ministerial, is *determined*. And here it is an abuse of language to say, that their decisions are only advisory.

There are some other questions in respect to fellowship through Councils, which need re-examination and settlement in order that the usages of our churches may be in entire agreement with the principles of Congregationalism, and self-consistent. We may rejoice that the recent National Council has opened the way for their adjustment by expressing a general approval of the elaborate and able papers submitted by the preliminary Committee on Church Polity, by appointing a large and influential Committee to revise and publish these documents, and by inviting "all members and ministers of Congregational churches to indicate such additions, emendations, and omissions as they may judge proper."

Under this invitation we may venture to express the wish that the Committee of the Council may give special attention to the statement of the principle, the obligation, and the agencies of Congregational fellowship. Let this subject, also, have its appropriate place in the teachings of the pulpit. Let the members of our churches become familiar with it in its history and varied practical applications. They will learn the more highly to value Congregationalism, and more earnestly to desire its prosperity. In its freedom they will discern the promise and pledge of a vigorous life; in its law of fellowship the security of peace, purity, and aggressive power.

☞ The Essay by Prof. E. A. Park, D. D., on the question: "How shall the Wants of the Churches for Ministers be met?" is not printed with these Minutes, for the reason that the author, in the multiplicity and pressure of other duties, has not been able to prepare the manuscript for the press.

DISTRICT CONFERENCES.

WITH THEIR OFFICES, TIMES OF MEETING, AND CHURCHES CONNECTED WITH THEM.

I. ANDOVER. Organized June 8, 1859.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Andover, South church,	Charles Smith.
" Theol. Sem. church,	*Faculty.*
" West church,	James H. Merrill.
" Free Christian church,	Stephen C. Leonard.
" Ballardvale, Un. ch.,	Henry S. Greene.
Chelmsford, N., Second church,	Benjamin F. Clark.
Dracut, First Evan. church,	[Lyman S. Watts, *lic.*, *s. s.*]
" West church,	Perrin B. Fisk.
" Central Orth. church,	George Pierce, Jr.
Lawrence, Lawrence-st. church,	Caleb E. Fisher.
" Central church,	Christopher M. Cordley.
Lowell, First church,	George N. Webber.
" Appleton-street church,	*None.*
" John-street church,	Joseph W. Backus.
" Kirk-street church,	Amos Blanchard, D. D.
" High-street church,	Owen Street.
Methuen, First church,	Edward H. Greeley.
North Andover, Evan. church,	B. F. Hamilton.
Tewksbury, Cong. church,	Richard Tolman.

Conference meets on the Second Wednesday in June.

Rev. Christopher M. Cordley, Lawrence, *Scribe.*

II. BARNSTABLE. Organized October 28, 1828.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Barnstable, West,	Henry A. Goodhue.
" Centreville,	Edward P. Stone, *s. s.*
" Hyannis,	*None.*
Chatham,	George Ritchie, *s. s.*
Dennis, South,	Harvey M. Stone, *s. s.*
Falmouth, First,	James P. Kimball.
" East,	Edwin Seabury, *s. s.*
" North,	Levi Wheaton, *s. s.*
" Waquoit,	David Brigham, *s. s.*

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Harwich,	Joseph R. Munsell, *s. s.*
" Port, Pilgrim church,	Alexander J. Bates, *s. s.*
Nantucket,	Samuel D. Hosmer, *s. s.*
Orleans,	J. E. M. Wright, *s. s.*
Provincetown,	Osborne Myrick.
Sandwich,	John C. Paine.
Truro, First church,	Edward W. Noble.
" North,	Philander Bates, *s. s.*
Wellfleet, First church,	George F. Walker.
" South, Second church,	H. M. Rogers, *s. s.*
Yarmouth, First church,	Joseph B. Clark.
" West, Second church,	*None.*

Conference meets on the Tuesday next preceding the full of the moon in June and December.

Rev. Henry A. Goodhue, West Barnstable, *Scribe.*

III. Berkshire South. Organized September 4, 1860.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Alford,	*None.*
Becket,	John Hartwell, *s. s.*
Egremont, South,	Timothy A. Hazen, *s. s.*
Great Barrington,	T. T. Stratton.
" Housatonic,	Josiah Brewer, *s. s.*
Lee,	Nahum Gale, D. D.
Lenox,	*None.*
Monterey,	James A. Clark.
Mount Washington,	*None.*
New Marlborough, First church,	Charles C. C. Painter.
" Southfield,	Irem W. Smith.
Otis,	H. W. Leonard, *s. s.*
Sheffield,	D. D. Shaler.
Stockbridge,	Nathaniel H. Eggleston.
" Curtisville,	George T. Dole, *s. s.*
West Stockbridge,	*None.*
" Centre,	Lewis Pennell.

Conference meets annually, on the Second Wednesday in November, and monthly during the autumn and winter.

Rev. Nathaniel H. Eggleston, Stockbridge, *Scribe.*

IV. Brookfield Associational. Organized June 10, 1838.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Barre, Evan. Cong. church,	David Peck.
Brimfield, First Cong. church,	Charles M. Hyde.
Brookfield, Evan. Cong. church,	Joshua Coit.
Charlton, Calv. Cong. church,	John Haven.
Dana, Cong. church,	*None.*
Dudley, Cong. church,	Henry Pratt.
Hardwick, Ortho. Cong. church,	Martyn Tupper.
Holland, Cong. church,	Alden Southworth.
New Braintree, Cong. church,	John H. Gurney.
North Brookfield, First Cong. ch.	Christopher Cushing.
" Union Con. ch.	Luther Keene.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Oakham, Evan. Cong. church,	Francis N. Peloubet.
Southbridge, Cong. church,	Edwin B. Palmer.
Spencer, Cong. church,	James Cruickshanks.
Sturbridge, Cong. church,	Marshall B. Angier.
Ware, First church,	William C. Tuttle.
" East Cong. church,	Ariel E. P. Perkins.
Warren, Cong. church,	Edwin L. Jaggar.
West Brookfield, Cong. church,	Samuel Dunham, *s. s.*

Conference meets on the Second Tuesday in June.

Rev. Joshua Coit, Brookfield, *Scribe.*

V. Essex North. Organized April 30, 1828.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Amesbury, West,	Leander Thompson.
" Mills,	Edward A. Rand.
" and Salisbury,	Edward O. Jameson.
Boxford, West,	Charles M. Peirce.
Bradford,	*None.*
Georgetown,	Charles Beecher.
" Orth. Cong. church,	*None.*
Groveland,	Martin S. Howard.
Haverhill, West,	Asa Farwell.
" East,	*None.*
" Centre,	Theodore T. Munger.
" North church,	Raymond H. Seeley, D. D.
Ipswich, First church,	Robert Southgate.
" Linebrook,	Ezekiel Dow.
Newbury, First church,	Leonard Withington, D. D. John R. Thurston.
" Byfield church,	*None.*
Newburyport, North church,	William A. McGinley.
" Fourth church,	Randolph Campbell.
" Belleville,	Daniel T. Fiske, D. D.
" Whitefield church,	Samuel J. Spalding, D. D.
Rowley,	John Pike.
Salisbury, Rocky Hill,	Benjamin Sawyer, *s. s.*
West Newbury, First church,	*None.*
" Second church,	Davis Foster.

Also, the Second Presbyterian church in Newburyport.

Conference meets on the Second Tuesday of October.

Rev. John R. Thurston, Newbury, *Scribe.*

VI. Essex South. Organized May 8, 1827.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Beverly, Dane-street church,	*None.*
" Washington-st. church,	Alonzo B. Rich.
" North, Fourth church,	Eli W. Harrington, *s. s.*
Danvers, First church,	Charles B. Rice.
" Maple-street church,	*None.*
Essex, First church,	James M. Bacon.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Gloucester, Harbor,	Isaiah C. Thatcher.
" Lanesville,	Thomas Morong.
" West,	Samuel Cole, *s. s.*
Hamilton,	S. Franklin French.
Ipswich, South,	Daniel Fitz, D. D.
Lynn, First church,	James M. Whiton.
" Central church,	Albert H. Currier.
" Chesnut-street church,	Edwin Smith.
Lynnfield Centre,	M. Bradford Boardman.
Manchester, Orthodox church,	Edward P. Tenney, *s. s.*
" The Ortho. church,	Francis V. Tenney.
Marblehead, Third church,	Timothy D. P. Stone.
Middleton,	*None.*
Rockport, First church,	William H. Dunning.
" Second church,	Luther H. Angier, (pastor elect.)
Salem, Third church,	Brown Emerson, D. D. Edward S. Atwood.
South Danvers, South church,	William M. Barbour.
Topsfield,	Anson McLoud.
Wenham,	John S. Sewall.

Conference meets on the Second Wednesday of June and October.

Rev. William M. Barbour, South Danvers, *Clerk.*

VII. Franklin. Organized Oct. 10, 1843.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Ashfield, First church,	Edward C. Ewing.
" Second church,	*None.*
Bernardston, Orth. Cong. church,	Freeman A. Merrill, *s. s.*
Buckland,	Charles Lord.
Charlemont, First church,	W. F. Bacon, *s. s.*
" East,	Aaron Foster.
Coleraine,	E. L. Burnett. *s. s.*
Conway,	Elijah Cutler.
Deerfield, Ortho. Cong. church,	Robert Crawford, D. D.
" South, First church,	*None.*
Erving, Evan. Cong. church,	Abijah Stowell, *s. s.*
Gill,	*None.*
Greenfield, First church,	*None.*
" Second church,	Artemas Dean.
Hawley, East,	Henry Seymour.
" West,	Robert Samuel, *s. s.*
Heath,	—— Alcott, *s. s.*
Montague, First Cong. church,	Edward Norton.
Northfield, Trin. Cong. church,	*None.*
Orange, Cen. Evan. Cong. church,	Andrew B. Foster, *s. s.*
Shelburne, First church,	Richard S. Billings.
" Falls,	Pliny S. Boyd.
Shutesbury, Orth. Cong. church,	*None.*
Sunderland,	*None.*
Warwick, Trin. Cong. church,	Edmund H. Blanchard.
Wendell, First church,	Willard Brigham, *s. s.*
Whately, Cong. church,	John W. Lane.

Conference meets on the Third Tuesday and Wednesday in October.

Rev. Robert Crawford, D. D., Deerfield, *Secretary.*

VIII. Hampden. Organized . . . . .

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Agawam,	Lewis Grout.
" Feeding Hills,	Ralph Perry.
Blandford,	Theodore A. Leete, *s. s.*
Chester, Hill,	Francis Warriner, *s. s.*
" Factories,	[Edwin A. Smith, *licentiate.*]
Chicopee, First church,	Eli B. Clark.
" Second church,	Roswell Foster.
" Third church,	Luther H. Cone.
Granville, East,	Archibald Geikie.
" West,	Andrew Gardner.
Holyoke, First church,	Simeon Miller.
" Second Church,	L. Root Eastman, Jr., *p. e.*
Huntington, Second church,	*None.*
Longmeadow,	John W. Harding.
" East,	Albert A. Peabody.
Ludlow,	Chester Bridgeman.
Monson,	Alfred Ely, D. D. / Theron G. Colton.
Montgomery,	*None.*
Palmer,	*None.*
South Hadley Falls,	Richard Knight.
Southwick,	David Beals, Jr., *s. s.*
Springfield, First church,	Henry M. Parsons.
" Olivet church,	William K. Hall, *s. s.*
" South church.	Samuel G. Buckingham.
" North church,	*None.*
" Indian Orchard,	*None.*
" Sandford-st. church,	William W. Mallory.
Westfield, First church,	Emerson Davis, D. D.
" Second church,	*None.*
West Springfield, First church,	Eden B. Foster, D. D.
" Second church,	John S. Batchelder, *s. s.*
Wilbraham,	Alexander D. Stowell.
" South church,	John Whitehill.

Conference meets annually in connection with Hampden County Benevolent Association, on the last Tuesday in October, at 3 P. M., continuing until Wednesday, at 4 P. M.

Rev. John W. Harding, Longmeadow, *Scribe.*

IX. Hampshire. Organized February, 1865.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Chesterfield,	Jesse A. Wilkins, *s. s.*
Cummington, First church,	*None.*
" Village,	J. Jay Dana, *s. s.*
" West, Village church,	Joseph B. Baldwin, *s. s.*
Easthampton, First church,	Aaron M. Colton.
" Payson church,	Samuel T. Seelye, D. D.
Goshen,	Sydney Holman, *s. s.*
Hatfield,	John M. Greene.
Huntington, First church,	[W. E. B. Moore, *licentiate.*]
Middlefield,	*None.*
Northampton, First church,	Zachary Eddy, D. D.
" Edwards church,	Gordon Hall, D. D.
" Florence church,	Horace C. Hovey.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Plainfield,	Solomon Clark, *s. s.*
Westhampton,	*None.*
Williamsburgh, First church,	Eliphalet Y. Swift.
" Haydenville,	George W. Phillips.
Worthington,	John H. Bisbee.

Conference meets on the First Tuesdays in April and September.

Rev. George W. Phillips, Haydenville, *Scribe.*

X. Hampshire, East. Organized . . . .

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Amherst, First church,	*None.*
" Second church,	Jay Clisbee.
" South church,	Walter Barton,
" College church,	William A. Stearns, D. D.
" North,	*None.*
Belchertown,	*None.*
Enfield,	John A. Seymour.
Granby,	Henry S. Kelsey.
Greenwich,	Edward P. Blodgett.
Hadley, First church,	Rowland Ayres.
" Second church,	Warren H. Beaman.
" Russell church,	Edward S. Dwight.
Hatfield,	John M. Greene.
Leverett,	*None.*
Pelham,	Robert D. Miller, *s. s.*
Prescott,	David Bancroft.
South Hadley, First church,	Hiram Mead.
" Falls,	Samuel J. M. Merwin.
Whately,	John W. Lane.

Conference meets on the Tuesdays next after the First Sabbath in May, and Second Sabbath in November.

Dea. S. Sweetser, Amherst, *Registrar.*

XI. Mendon. Organized April 27, 1858.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Foxboro', Ortho. Cong. church,	Noadiah S. Dickinson.
Franklin,	George A. Pelton, *s. s.*
" South, Un. Cong. church,	Ebenezer Burgess, *s. s.*
Mansfield, Ortho. Cong. church,	Jacob Ide, Jr.
Medfield, Second Cong. church,	Andrew Bigelow.
Medway, East, First church,	Jacob Roberts.
" West, Second church,	Jacob Ide, D. D.
" Village church,	David Sanford.
Mendon, Evan. church,	*None.*
Milford, First Cong. church,	*None.*
Walpole, Ortho. Cong. church,	Edward G. Thurber.
Wrentham, Orig. Cong. church,	*None.*
" North, Union church,	John E. Corey, *s. s.*

Conference meets on the Tuesday and Wednesday of such week in October as shall be designated by the Committee of Arrangements.

Rev. Andrew Bigelow, Medfield, *Scribe.*

XII. Middlesex South. Organized . . . .

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Ashland,	George G. Phipps, *s. s.*
Concord,	Edward S. Potter, *s. s.*
Dover,	Thomas S. Norton, *s. s.*
Framingham,	John Knox McLean.
" Saxonville,	George E. Hill.
Holliston,	Joshua T. Tucker.
Hopkinton,	*None.*
Lincoln,	Henry J. Richardson.
Marlboro',	George N. Anthony.
Natick,	Charles M. Tyler.
" South,	George W. Sargent.
Needham, Grantville,	*None.*
" Wellesley,	Henry D. Woodworth, *s. s.*
Sherborn,	Edmund Dowse.
Southboro',	John Colby.
" Southville,	S. L. Hobbs, *s. s.*
Stowe, Assabet,	*None.*
Sudbury,	Erastus Dickenson.
Wayland,	Henry Bullard.

Conference meets on the Fourth Tuesday in April and the Third Tuesday in October.

Rev. Henry Bullard, Wayland, *Scribe.*

XIII. Middlesex Union. Organized May 8, 1833.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Acton,	George W. Colman.
Ashby,	Horace Parker.
Boxboro',	*None.*
Dunstable,	William C. Jackson.
Fitchburg,	Alfred Emerson.
Groton,	William W. Parker.
" South,	*None.*
Harvard,	*None.*
Lancaster,	George R. Leavitt.
Leominster,	William J. Batt.
Littleton,	Elihu Loomis, *s. s.*
Lunenburg,	William A. Mandell.
Pepperell,	S. Leroy Blake.
Shirley,	Albert I. Dutton.
Townsend,	John C. Hutchinson, *s. s.*
Westford,	E. A. Spence, *s. s.*

Conference meets in October.

Rev. . . . . *Secretary.*

XIV. Norfolk. Organized June 14, 1827.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Abington, First church,	Frederic R. Abbe.
" South, Second church,	Henry L. Edwards.
" East, Third church,	Horace D. Walker.
" North, Fourth church,	*None.*

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Braintree, South church,	*None.*
Bridgewater, First Trin. church,	Ebenezer Douglass.
Canton, Evan. church,	*None.*
Cohasset, Second church,	Frederic A. Reed.
" Beechwood, Ev. Un. ch.	Cyrus Stone, *s. s.*
Dorchester, Second church,	James H. Means.
" Village church,	A. Judson Rich.
" Port Norfolk, Trin. ch.	George E. Freeman.
" Hyde Park,	*None.*
East Bridgewater, Union church,	Nathaniel H. Broughton, *s. s.*
Easton,	Luther Sheldon, D. D.
Hingham, Evan. church,	*None.*
Milton, First church,	Albert K. Teele.
" Railway Vill., Second ch.	*None.*
North Bridgewater, First church,	Edward L. Clark.
" Campello, South ch.	Charles W. Wood.
" Porter Evan. church,	Samuel H. Lee.
Quincy, Evan. church,	Edward P. Thwing.
Randolph, First church,	*None.*
" East, 2d ch. No public services,	*None.*
" Winthrop church,	Ezekiel Russell, D. D.
Sharon, First church,	Perley B. Davis.
Stoughton, First church,	Thomas Wilson.
Weymouth, North, First church,	Joshua Emery.
" South, Second church,	James P. Terry.
" Un. of Braintree and Weym'th,	Lysander Dickerman.
" South, Union church,	Stephen H. Hayes.
" East, church,	James P. Lane.
" North, Pilgrim church,	Samuel L. Rockwood.

Conference meets on First Tuesday in May and last Tuesday in September.

Rev. James P. Lane, East Weymouth, *Scribe.*

XV. Old Colony. Organized September 23, 1856.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Dartmouth, South,	John M. Lord, *s. s.*
Fairhaven,	John Willard.
Marion,	Leander Cobb.
Mattapoisett,	John P. Cleaveland, D. D., *s. s.*
Middleboro', First church,	Israel W. Putnam, D. D.
" Central church,	*None.*
New Bedford, First church,	Asahel Cobb.
" North church,	Alonzo H. Quint.
" Trin. church,	Wheelock Craig.
" Pacific church,	Timothy Stowe.
Rochester,	Edwin Leonard.
" North,	James R. Cushing, *s. s.*
Wareham,	Timothy F. Clary.
Westport,	Isaac Dunham, *s. s.*

Conference meets on the Third Tuesdays in April and October.

Rev. Wheelock Craig, New Bedford, *Clerk.*

XVI. Pilgrim. Organized April 27, 1830.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Carver,	Henry L. Chase.
Halifax,	Timothy G. Brainerd.
Hanover, First church,	Joseph Freeman.
" Second church,	James Aiken.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Hanson,	Benjamin Southworth, *s. s.*
Kingston,	Joseph Peckham, *s. s.*
Marshfield, First church,	Ebenezer Alden, Jr.
" Second church,	*None.*
Plymouth, Second church,	Sylvester Holmes, *s. s.*
" Third church,	David Bremner.
" Fourth church,	*None.*
" Fifth church,	Alexander Fuller, Jr.
Plympton,	*None.*
Scituate,	Alexander J. Sessions.

Conference meets on the Third Tuesdays of April and October.

Rev. Alexander Fuller, Jr., Chiltonville, *Scribe* and *Treasurer*.

SALEM MISSIONARY UNION, reported last year, has been disbanded, —the churches uniting with, and being reported in, other Conferences.

XVII. SUFFOLK NORTH. Organized . . . .

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Boston, Old South church, }	{ George W. Blagden, D. D.
" Chambers street, }	{ Jacob M. Manning.
" Salem church,	Solomon P. Fay, *s. s.*
" Mt. Vernon church,	Edward N. Kirk, D. D.
" East, Maverick church,	Joel S. Bingham.
Cambridge, First church,	*None.*
" Port, First church,	*None.*
" East, Ev. Cong. ch.	*None.*
Charlestown, First church,	James B. Miles.
" Winthrop church,	J. Eames Rankin.
Chelsea, Winnisimmet church,	Albert H. Plumb.
" Broadway church,	Samuel E. Herrick.
North Chelsea,	*None.*
Reading, Old South church,	William Barrows.
Somerville, East, First church,	David T. Packard.
" Winter Hill,	E. Porter Dyer, *s. s.*
Waltham,	*None.*
West Cambridge,	Daniel R. Cady.

Conference meets in April and October.

Moses H. Sargent, 13 Cornhill, Boston, *Secretary*.

XVIII. SUFFOLK SOUTH. Organized . . . .

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Boston, Park street church,	Andrew L. Stone, D. D.
" Union church,	Nehemiah Adams, D. D.
" Berkeley street church,	Henry M. Dexter, D. D.
" Central church,	John E. Todd.
" Shawmut church,	Edwin B. Webb, D. D.
" Springfield street church,	Daniel Tenney.
" South, Phillips church,	Edmund K. Alden.
" " E street church,	A. R. Baker, *s. s.*
Brighton, Evan. Cong. church,	John P. Cushman.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Brookline, Harvard church,	C. C. Carpenter.
Dedham, First church,	Jonathan Edwards.
" South, Evan. church,	Moses M. Colburn.
Newton Centre, First church,	Daniel L. Furber.
" West, Second church,	Henry J. Patrick.
" Corner, Eliot church,	Joshua W. Wellman.
" Auburndale, Ortho. ch.	Augustus H. Carrier.
Roxbury, Eliot church,	Augustus C. Thompson, D. D.
" Vine street church,	John O. Means.
Watertown, Phillips church,	James M. Bell.
West Roxbury, South Evan. ch.	Thomas Laurie, D. D.
" Jamaica Plain, Mather ch.	Francis B. Perkins.

Conference meets on the Third Wednesday in April and the Third Wednesday in October.

Rev. Henry J. Patrick, West Newton, *Recording* and *Statistical Secretary*.

XIX. Taunton and Vicinity. Organized . . . .

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Attleboro, East,	*None.*
" West,	David Breed, *s. s.*
Berkley,	Daniel H. Babcock, *s. s.*
" Trin. Cong. church,	J. Austin Roberts.
Bridgewater, (Scotland)	Hartford P. Leonard, *s. s.*
Dighton,	Ebenezer Dawes, *s. s.*
Fall River, First church,	William W. Adams.
" Central church,	Eli Thurston.
Freetown, (Assonet)	Abel G. Duncan, *s. s.*
Lakeville,	James W. Ward, *s. s.*
Middleboro', North,	Elbridge G. Little.
Norton,	Henry C. Fay, *s. s.*
Raynham,	William J. Breed, *s. s.*
Rehoboth,	Frederic W. Boynton.
Seekonk,	James O. Barney.
Somerset,	William H. Bessom, *s. s.*
Taunton, East,	George G. Perkins, *s. s.*
" First church,	Thomas T. Richmond.
" Trin. Cong. church,	Erastus Maltby.
" Winslow church,	Mortimer Blake.

Conference meets on the Second Tuesday in October, and occasional in May.

Rev. Mortimer Blake, Taunton, *Scribe*.

XX. Woburn. Organized December 5, 1849.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Bedford,	*None.*
Billerica,	Jesse G. D. Stearns.
Burlington,	Joseph E. Swallow, *s. s.*
Carlisle,	William H. Dowden, *s. s.*
Malden, First church,	Charles E. Reed.
Medford, First Trin. Cong. ch.	James T. McCollom, *p. s.*
" Mystic church,	Edward P. Hooker.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Melrose,	Henry A. Stevens.
North Reading.	T. Newton Jones.
Reading, Bethesda church,	William H. Willcox.
South Reading,	Charles R. Bliss.
Stoneham,	Swift Byington.
Wilmington,	Samuel H. Tolman.
Winchester,	Reuben T. Robinson.
Woburn, First church,	Joseph C. Bodwell, D. D.
" North church,	Willard M. Harding, *s. s.*

Conference meets on the Last Tuesdays in April and October.

Rev. Edward P. Hooker, Medford, *Clerk.*

XXI. Worcester Central. Organized April 28, 1852.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Auburn,	Charles Kendall, *s. s.*
Berlin, First church,	William A. Houghton.
Boylston,	A. Hastings Ross.
Clinton, First Evan. church,	Benjamin Judkins, *s. s.*
Holden,	William P. Paine, D. D.
Leicester, First Cong. church,	John Nelson, D. D. Amos H. Coolidge.
Northboro',	George E. Sanborne.
Oxford,	Samu·l J. Austin.
Paxton,	William Phipps.
Princeton, Trinitarian church,	John S. Zelie, *s. s.*
Rutland,	Clarendon Waite.
Shrewsbury,	*None.*
Sterling,	John C. Labaree, *s. s.*
West Boylston, First church,	James H. Fitts.
Worcester, First church,	*None.*
" Calvinist church,	Seth Sweetser, D. D.
" Union church,	Ebenezer Cutler.
" Salem-street church.	Merrill Richardson.

Conference meets on the Wednesday following the Third Monday in April and October.

Rev. Charles Kendall, Auburn, *Scribe.*

XXII. Worcester North. Organized November 14, 1827.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Ashburnham, First church,	George E. Fisher.
" Second church,	Daniel Wight, Jr.
Athol,	John F. Norton.
Gardner, First church,	William D. Herrick.
" Evangelical church,	*None.*
Hubbardston,	*None.*
New Salem,	David Eastman, *s. s.*
Petersham,	William Miller, *s. s.*
Phillipston,	Lyman White.
Royalston, First church,	Ebenezer W. Bullard.
" Second church,	Franklin D. Austin, *s. s.*

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Templeton,	Lewis Sabin, D. D.
Westminster,	Milan H. Hitchcock.
Winchendon, First church,	Benjamin F. Clarke.
" North church,	Abijah P. Marvin.

Conference meets on the Second Tuesday in June and the following Wednesday.

Rev. George E. Fisher, Ashburnham, *Scribe.*

XXIII. Worcester South. Organized June 17, 1828.

Churches.	*Ministers.*
Blackstone,	John E. Edwards, *s. s.*
Douglas,	Francis Dyer, *s. s.*
" East,	*None.*
Grafton,	Thomas C. Biscoe.
" Saundersville,	Simeon Waters, *s. s.*
Millbury, First church,	Edmund Y. Garrette.
" Second church,	*None.*
Northbridge,	Calvin Terry, *s. s.*
" Whitinsville,	Lewis F. Clark.
Sutton,	George Lyman.
Upton,	*None.*
Uxbridge,	Joseph B. Johnson.
Webster,	S. C. Kendall.
Westboro',	Luther H. Sheldon.

Conference meets on the Fourth Tuesdays in April and October.

Rev. George Lyman, Sutton, *Secretary.*

Correction.—Rev. Solomon Clark (page 5) should have been printed as representing *Hampshire* Conference, and not Hampshire *East* Conference.

APPENDIX.

REPORTS FROM THE CHURCHES.

Pastors of churches are requested to copy the headings, Nos. 1, 2, and 3, upon as many sheets of commercial note paper; and, after having filled out reports in accordance with the accompanying suggestions, severally to forward the same to Rev. DANIEL P. NOYES, Congregational Building, No. 23 CHAUNCY STREET, BOSTON.

Blank No. 4, (in copies of Minutes sent to pastors,) is of sized paper, and can be *filled out* and forwarded to the same address.

No. 1.

PARISH BOUNDS.

THE PARISH of the CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH of is bounded as follows:

[Please give the bounds so that they can be traced on the county map.]

No. 2.

OUTLYING DISTRICTS.

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF

Within the parish of this church, there are *districts or neighborhoods*, the populations of which are, to a considerable extent, *not reached by the stated means of grace*, as follows:

[Please give the *locality*; the *name*, if any; the *number* and *character* of the population; and the *degree* and *occasion* of their neglect; with any efforts that are made or are possible, for their spiritual good.

Please state also whether there is any locality, within your knowledge, where *a church* ought soon to be formed; or where beginnings ought to be made, looking towards such a result.

Is there any locality within your parish, in need of a *chapel*?]

No. 3.

CLASSES OF NEGLECTERS,

Within the PARISH of the CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH of

[Please describe any classes of persons, in your parish, who, although *dwelling within convenient reach of the sanctuary, habitually neglect* its privileges; giving their *numbers*, *character*, the *degree* and the *occasion* (so far as known) of this neglect, with any means that have been or can be used for their spiritual good.]

The General Conference of Massachusetts.

1866.

MINUTES

OF THE

SEVENTH ANNUAL SESSION,

HELD IN THE

FIRST CHURCH, NORTHAMPTON,

SEPTEMBER 11—13.

WITH

ESSAYS, REPORTS,

AND A

LIST OF THE LOCAL CONFERENCES, AND OF THE CHURCHES CONNECTED WITH THEM.

BOSTON:
CONGREGATIONAL BOARD OF PUBLICATION,
13 CORNHILL.
1866.

The General Conference of Massachusetts.

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BOSTON:
PRESS OF T. R. MARVIN & SON, 42 CONGRESS STREET.
1866.

NOTICES.

THE meeting of the Conference in 1867, will be held in the Calvinistic Church, (Rev. Alfred Emerson,) Fitchburg, commencing on Tuesday, September 10, at Four o'clock, and closing at Four o'clock, of the Thursday following.

Rev. EDWIN B. WEBB, D. D., of Boston, is elected Preacher of the opening Sermon, and Rev. JOHN TODD, D. D., of Pittsfield, substitute.

Franklin Conference will furnish the Preacher of the Sermon, which is to be preached in connection with the observance of the Lord's Supper.

OFFICERS.

Provisional Committee for 1867.

Rev. ALFRED EMERSON, Fitchburg.
Rev. EBENEZER CUTLER, D. D., Worcester.
Rev. GEORGE E. FISHER, Ashburnham.
Bro. ALFRED HITCHCOCK, Fitchburg.
Bro. GEORGE A. KENDALL, Worcester.

Recording Secretary.

Rev. JOSHUA W. WELLMAN, Newton.

Statistical Secretary.

Rev. ALONZO H. QUINT, D. D., New Bedford.

Treasurer.

Bro. STEPHEN T. FARWELL, Boston.

MINUTES.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES OF MASSACHUSETTS, convened in the meeting-house of the First Church of Northampton, on the eleventh day of September, 1866, at four o'clock, P. M. Rev. Zachary Eddy, D. D., called the meeting to order, and, a quorum being present, Rev. Samuel T. Seelye, D. D., of Easthampton, was chosen Moderator, and, on taking the chair, conducted the devotional exercises, after which Rev. Joshua W. Wellman, of Newton, was chosen Recording Secretary for three years, and Rev. James P. Kimball, of Falmouth, Scribe.

The Conference then proceeded to appoint Committees, as follows:

On Credentials.—Rev. Lysander Dickerman, of Weymouth; Rev. George E. Fisher, of Ashburnham; Dea. Stillman E. Parker, of Reading.

Committee of Arrangements.—Rev. Z. Eddy, D. D., of Northampton; Bro. William B. Hale, of Northampton; Rev. Edward S. Dwight, of Hadley.

On Nominations.—Rev. Augustus C. Thompson, D. D., of Roxbury; Rev. Alfred Emerson, of Fitchburg; Dea. Joseph W. Bacon, of Newton.

The Conference then adjourned to meet at half-past seven o'clock, P. M.

Tuesday evening.—The Conference assembled at half-past seven o'clock. Devotional exercises were conducted by Rev. Daniel T. Fiske, D. D., of Newburyport, after which a Sermon was preached by Rev. Augustus C. Thompson, D. D., of Roxbury, from the text,—Matt. xxvi. 40: "And he cometh unto the disciples and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?"

The Chairman of the Committee on credentials reported the names of all the members of the Conference, so far as they were present.

ROLL OF THE CONFERENCE.

Andover Conference:—

Rev. George N. Webber, Lowell.
Dea. John Smith, Andover.
Bro. James G. Buttrick, Lowell.
Bro. Joseph Howe, Methuen.

Barnstable County Conference:—

Rev. James P. Kimball, Falmouth.
Rev. Alvan J. Bates, Harwich Port.

Berkshire South Conference:—

Rev. Nahum Gale, D. D., Lee.
Rev. D. Du Bois Sahler, Sheffield.
Bro. Arthur Gilman, Lee.

Brookfield Conference:—

Rev. Henry Pratt, Dudley.
Rev. William G. Tuttle, Ware.
Bro. Ezra D. Batchelder, North Brookfield.

Essex North Conference:—

Rev. Daniel T. Fiske, D. D., Newburyport.
Rev. Leander Thompson, West Amesbury.
Bro. Warren Averill, Ipswich.
Bro. Richard Tenney, Georgetown.

Essex South Conference:—

Rev. Alonzo B. Rich, Beverly.

Franklin County Conference:—

Rev. Richard S. Billings, Shelburne.
Rev. Willard Brigham, Wendell.
Dea. Albert S. Clapp, South Deerfield.
Dea. Richard Clapp, Montague.
Dea. Reuben Nims, Shelburne.

Hampden County Conference:—

Rev. Luther H. Cone, Chicopee.
Rev. Austin Gardner, West Granville.
Dea. Gamaliel Marsh, Chicopee.
Bro. Obadiah W. Wilcox, Springfield.
Bro. James L. Whitney, Springfield.

Hampshire Conference:—

Rev. Samuel T. Seelye, D. D., Easthampton.
Rev. George W. Phillips, Haydenville.
Bro. William B. Hall, Northampton.
Bro. Joel Hayden, Haydenville.

Hampshire East Conference:—

Rev. Edward S. Dwight, Hadley.
Rev. Edward P. Blodgett, Greenwich.
Bro. Silas G. Hubbard, Hatfield.
Dea. Sylvester Smith, Hadley.
Dea. Ephraim Montague, Belchertown.

Mendon Conference:—

Rev. Edward G. Thurber, Walpole.
Dea. Benjamin Cheney, Medfield.

Middlesex South Conference:—

Rev. Henry J. Richardson, Lincoln.
Dea. William Seaver, Ashland.
Dea. Moses L. Buck, Hopkinton.

Middlesex Union Conference:—

Rev. Alfred Emerson, Fitchburg.
Rev. Elihu Loomis, Littleton.
Bro. Joel Hayward, Ashby.

Norfolk Conference:—

Rev. Lysander Dickerman, Weymouth.
Bro. Cyrus Brewer, Dorchester.

Old Colony Conference:—

Rev. John P. Cleveland, D. D., Mattapoisett.
Rev. Isaac Dunham, Westport.

Pilgrim Conference:—

Rev. Henry L. Chase, Carver.
Rev. Joseph Freeman, Hanover.
Bro. Lewis Simmons, Marshfield.

Suffolk North Conference:—

Suffolk South Conference:—

Rev. Augustus C. Thompson, D. D., Roxbury.
Rev. Edwin B. Webb, D. D., Boston.
Dea. Joseph N. Bacon, Newton.
Bro. Charles Hurlbut, Roxbury.
Bro. J. Russell Bradford, Roxbury.

Taunton and Vicinity Conference:—

Woburn Conference:—

Rev. William H. Dowden, Carlisle.
Rev. Edward P. Hooker, Medford.
Dea. Stillman E. Parker, Reading.
Bro. Marcus B. Webber, Bedford.

Worcester Central Conference:—

Rev. James H. Fitts, West Boylston
Rev. Samuel J. Austin, Oxford.
Dea. Ephraim A. Harwood, Worcester.

Worcester North Conference:—

Rev. George E. Fisher, Ashburnham.
Rev. Lyman White, Phillipston.
Dea. George Kelton, Gardner.

EX OFFICIIS.

Rev. Joshua W. Wellman, *Recording Secretary.*
Bro. Stephen T. Farwell, *Treasurer.*
Rev. William M. Barbour, *Preacher of the Communion Sermon.*

FROM CORRESPONDING BODIES.

Rev. Prescott Fay, of Rochester, N. H., from the General Association of New Hampshire.

Rev. George P. Tyler, D. D., of Brattleboro', Vt., from the General Convention of Vermont.

Rev. Edwin J. Sherrell, of Eaton, Canada East, from the Congregational Union of Canada.

Rev. William L. Bray, of Aurora, Ill., from the General Association of Illinois.

Bro. John L. Kingsbury, LL. D., Providence, R. I., from the Conference of the Congregational Churches of Rhode Island.

Adjourned to meet at half-past eight o'clock, on Wednesday morning.

SECOND DAY.

Wednesday, September 12. At half-past eight the Moderator called the Conference to order, and requested Rev. Abijah P. Marvin, of Boston, to conduct the devotional exercises, which were continued one hour.

FIRST ESSAY.

Rev. Mark Hopkins, D. D., of Williamstown, read an Essay on "The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Latter Days."

A discussion followed, in which the following brethren took a part: Rev. John P. Cleveland, D..D., of Mattapoiset; Rev. Elihu P. Marvin, D. D., of Medford; Rev. Zachary Eddy, D. D., of Northampton; Rev. Mark Hopkins, D. D., of Williamstown; Rev. Alonzo B. Rich, of Beverly; Rev. George Trask, of Fitchburg; Rev. Abijah P. Marvin, of Boston; Rev. Daniel D. Sahler, of Sheffield; and Rev. William A. Stearns, D. D., of Amherst.

BUSINESS.

The Constitution and By-Laws were read by the Recording Secretary.

The Committee on Nominations reported as follows:—

DELEGATES TO CORRESPONDING BODIES.

To the General Conference of Rhode Island:

Rev. John Todd, D. D., of Pittsfield, Primary.
Rev. John P. Cleveland, D. D., of Mattapoiset, Substitute.

To the General Conference of Maine:

Bro. Marshall S. Scudder, of Grantville, Primary.
Rev. Nahum Gale, D. D., of Lee, Substitute.

To the General Association of New Hampshire:

Bro. Albert Currier, of Newburyport, Primary.
Bro. William B. Hale, of Northampton, Substitute.

To the Congregational Union of Canada:

Rev. Elnathan E. Strong, of Waltham, Primary.
Bro. Joel Hayden, of Haydenville, Substitute.

To the General Association of Iowa:

Bro. David Choate, of Essex, Primary.
Dea. William Hyde, of Ware, Substitute.

To the General Convention of Vermont:

Rev. Alonzo B. Rich, of Beverly, Primary.
Rev. Zachary Eddy, D. D., of Northampton, Substitute.

To the General Conference of Missouri:

Rev. Joshua W. Wellman, of Newton.

To the General Association of Illinois:

Rev. Samuel G. Buckingham, of Springfield, Primary.
Rev. John F. Norton, of Athol, Substitute.

To the General Conference of Michigan:

Bro. Obadiah W. Wilcox, of Springfield, Primary.
Rev. Erastus Maltby, of Taunton, Substitute.

Committee on the State of Religion.—Rev. Daniel T. Fiske, D. D., of Newburyport; Rev. Leander Thompson, of West Amesbury; Rev. Edward S. Dwight, of Hadley; Dea. Stillman E. Parker, of Reading; Bro. Cyrus Brewer, of Dorchester.

Provisional Committee for 1867.—Rev. Alfred Emerson, of Fitchburg; Rev. Ebenezer Cutler, D. D., of Worcester; Rev. George E. Fisher, of Ashburnham; Bro. Alfred Hitchcock, M. D., of Fitchburg; Bro. George A. Kendall, of Worcester.

Finance Committee.—Bro. Stephen T. Farwell, of Cambridge; Bro. Chas. Hurlbut, of Roxbury; Dea. Ephraim A. Harwood, of Worcester.

Auditor.—Bro. William B. Hale, of Northampton.

The Report was accepted and adopted.

REPORTS OF THE TREASURER AND FINANCE COMMITTEE.

The Treasurer of the Conference presented his Report, which having been audited was referred to the Committee on Finance; subsequently this Committee reported as follows:—

The Committee on Finance, to whom was referred the Treasurer's Report, in discharge of the duty assigned them, respectfully Report: That to meet the expenses of the ensuing year, viz., the cost of printing an edition

of 2,500 copies of the Minutes of the Conference, and incidental expenses, and to pay the balance due the Treasurer, will require about the sum of six hundred and seventy-five dollars; and they would recommend the adoption of the following vote:

Voted, That the Treasurer be directed to notify the Scribes or Treasurers of the several Local Conferences, of the assessments upon each Conference of a sum equal to two dollars each church, and to request those officers to collect the same immediately and forward the amount to the Treasurer of the General Conference.

This Report on Finance was accepted and adopted.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOME EVANGELIZATION.

The Committee on Home Evangelization, through its Chairman, Rev. E. B. Webb, D. D., of Boston, reported as follows:—

At the last General Conference of Massachusetts, the following Resolution was adopted:

"*Resolved*, That while we assume the support, for the current year, of the cause of 'Home Evangelization,' we yet feel that the work properly belongs to the 'Home Missionary Society,' and we earnestly recommend that it be assumed by that Society as soon as possible."

In order to secure the end contemplated and "earnestly recommended" in this resolution, the undersigned were appointed a Sub Committee at a regular meeting of the General Committee on Home Evangelization held in the Old South Chapel, Boston, October, 1865.

The history and result of our doings are herewith submitted. We immediately arranged a meeting with the Executive Committee of the Home Missionary Society, and met them according to appointment. We were cordially received and patiently heard. The whole work of the Home Missionary Society—its history and design—were freely discussed, as was also the miserable condition of multitudes still unevangelized, and unreached by any agents yet employed. One fact was soon apparent, that while the friends of Home Evangelization would yield to none in their devotion to Home Missions, the Executive Committee of the Home Missionary Society were sympathetically alive to the heathenism which exists in the midst of our churches, and sincerely disposed to go to the limit of their trust in providing the remedy.

After several conferences and discussions the following propositions were submitted by your Committee, subject to the approval of the General Conference.

1st. That the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society, in addition to the work hitherto performed by it, undertake the distinctive work of "Home Evangelization," or the Christianizing of our neglectful and neglected population.

2d. That the State Conference invite the Home Missionary Society to hold a meeting or meetings, annually, in connection with its sessions.

3d. That at this meeting of the Conference and Society all the appointments be announced, and all the reports be made, relating to Home Evangelization.

And in reply, we received from the Executive Committee of the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society, the following:

"To the proposal that the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society, in addition to the work hitherto performed by it, assume the work of Home Evangelization, the Executive Committee of that Society reply as follows:

"Inasmuch as the Home Evangelization work originated with the General Conference, and has already become a distinctive work of that body, has hitherto been wholly under its care,—its Secretary having been appointed by it, and all Reports having been made to it,—and also, inasmuch as considerable numbers of the friends of Home Missions do not see the way clear for the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society to adopt the Home Evangelization work; and inasmuch as the Missionary Society is already fully occupied with the work now upon its hands,—therefore it is the opinion of the Executive Committee that the Home Evangelization work, for the present at least, should remain in the care of the General Conference, and not be handed over to the care of any other ecclesiastical or missionary body.

"The Executive Committee, however, believing that the Home Evangelization work has an important bearing on the moral and spiritual welfare of much people in the Commonwealth; that it is deeply interesting to large numbers of the friends of Home Missions, as an experiment worthy of a fair trial and much sacrifice to test its value; and believing that, in several ways, such a work can reach, with good influences, communities greatly needing them, and that, in these respects, the Home Evangelization work can be made a valuable auxiliary to the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society, in the 'Christianizing of the neglectful and neglected population of the State,' in which work the Society has already been so long engaged;—therefore, the Executive Committee consent to sustain the same relation to Home Evangelization which it has already sustained, but upon a larger scale; namely, that they will assume the expense of the work for the current year, to an amount not exceeding *twenty-five hundred dollars*, should that sum be needed in the work, on the following terms:

"1st. That one fourth of the time of the Secretary of Home Evangelization shall be at the disposal of the Executive Committee of the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society, if called for.

"2d. That the General Conference shall pledge the churches it represents to approve of the expense thus incurred by the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society.

"The second and third propositions of the Committee of General Conference, being supposed to be dependent upon the assumption of the Home

Evangelization work by the Missionary Society, no action seemed to be required by the Executive Committee.

"In behalf of the Executive Committee.

"H. B. HOOKER, *Secretary.*"

Respectfully submitted,

E. B. WEBB,
J. W. WELLMAN,
M. S. SCUDDER,
Committee to confer with the Home Missionary Society.

The Report was accepted, and the following Resolution was adopted by the Conference:

Whereas, the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society proposes to aid, to the amount of $2,500 per annum, the work conducted by the State Committee on Home Evangelization, the General Conference hereby cordially commends this proposal; and in view of it, and of the Society's increased appropriations in behalf of the feeble churches within the State, the Conference pledges a renewed interest in this beloved Society, and its best endeavors to secure enlarged contributions to its treasury.

TEMPERANCE.

The following Resolution on the subject of Temperance was adopted by the Conference:

Resolved, That we approve of the New England Temperance Convention, to be held in Boston, on the 3d and 4th days of October next, and that we appoint seven delegates to represent this body in that Convention.

At half-past twelve, the Conference adjourned, to meet at two o'clock.

Wednesday Afternoon. The Conference assembled, according to adjournment. Devotional exercises were conducted by Rev. Alonzo B. Rich, of Beverly, and continued for half an hour.

SECOND ESSAY.

Rev. William S. Tyler, D. D., of Amherst, read an Essay on "Revivals of Religion," which was followed by a discussion, participated in by the following brethren: Rev. Joshua W. Wellman, of Newton; Rev. Wm. A. Stearns, D. D., of Amherst; Rev. Ariel E. P. Perkins, of Ware; Rev. Charles L. Woodworth, of Amherst; Rev. George Trask, of Fitchburg; Rev. Augustus C. Thompson, D. D., of Roxbury; and Rev. William Patton, D. D., of New Haven, Ct.

BUSINESS.

At half-past four o'clock, Rev. Daniel T. Fiske, D. D., presented the subject of the union of the General Conference and the General Association, and the following Resolutions, which were adopted by the Conference, no one opposing:

Resolved, 1st, That in view of the manifest general desire for a union of the General Conference and the General Association of Massachusetts, the General Conference hereby declares its willingness to consummate the union on the terms proposed by the General Association in 1863, provided a majority of the Local Conferences approve of the measure; to wit:

"That the General Association of Massachusetts, and the General Conference of Congregational Churches of Massachusetts, unite under the name of '*The General Association of Congregational Churches of Massachusetts;*' that the membership of this body consist of two delegates annually appointed by each District Association of the State, and three lay delegates, annually appointed by each District Conference of the State; —and that all other matters as to the Constitution and Rules of the body, be left to be arranged by the body itself, after such union shall be formed."

2d. That the question of the proposed union be submitted to the Local Conferences, and that they be requested to take immediate action on the matter, and report to the Chairman of a Committee hereafter provided for.

3d. That a Committee be chosen to promote this measure, and—in case a majority of the Local Conferences approve it,—that they be empowered, in connection with a similar Committee which may be appointed by the General Association, to draw up a Constitution for the united body, to be presented to it at its first meeting, and to designate the time and place of said meeting.

4th. That such alterations of the Constitution and By-laws of this Conference as may be necessary to effect this union, in a satisfactory manner, are hereby proposed.

Adjourned to meet at seven and one-half o'clock.

Wednesday Evening, at half-past seven o'clock, the Conference was called to order, and Rev. Joseph Freeman, of Hanover, offered prayer.

THIRD ESSAY.

An Essay was then read by Rev. William W. Woodworth, of Belchertown, upon "Living Household Piety Essential to the Spiritual Power and Prosperity of the Church," which was followed by a discussion, in which the following brethren took part: Bro. Lyman Parsons, of Northampton; Rev. George Trask, of Fitchburg; Bro. J. Russell Bradford, of Roxbury; Bro. Cyrus Brewer, of Dorchester; Rev. James P. Kimball, of Falmouth; Rev. William Patton, D. D., of New Haven, Ct., and Rev. John W. Harding, of Longmeadow.

At quarter-past nine o'clock, after prayer by Rev. Henry B. Hooker, D. D., of Boston, the Conference adjourned to meet at half-past eight o'clock, A. M., on Thursday.

THIRD DAY.

Thursday Morning. At half-past eight the Conference was called to order by the Moderator, who requested Rev. Mark Hopkins, D. D., to conduct the religious exercises, which were continued three-quarters of an hour.

REPORTS OF DELEGATES FROM CORRESPONDING BODIES.

Reports of Delegates from Corresponding Bodies were made by Rev. Edwin J. Sherrill, of Eaton, Canada East, from the Congregational Union of Canada; Rev. William L. Bray, of Aurora, Illinois, from the General Association of Illinois; Bro. John L. Kingsbury, LL. D., of Providence, R. I., from the Conference of the Congregational Churches of Rhode Island; Rev. George P. Tyler, D. D., of Brattleboro, Vt., from the General Convention of Vermont; and Rev. Prescott Fay, of Rochester, N. H., from the General Association of New Hampshire. A letter was read from Rev. George A. Putnam, of Yarmouth, Me., representing the Conference of Maine.

The Conference also listened to a brief Address from Rev. Isaac G. Bliss, of Constantinople, representing the Churches of the Levant, and making an earnest appeal for aid in erecting a Bible House in Constantinople.

A brief and appropriate reply to the addresses of the representatives of Corresponding Bodies was made by the Moderator.

PLACE OF MEETING AND PREACHER FOR 1867.

On motion of Rev. Alfred Emerson, of the Provisional Committee for 1867, it was

Voted, That the Conference of 1867 be held with the Calvinistic Church, (Rev. Alfred Emerson's,) in Fitchburg; that Rev. Edwin B. Webb, D. D., of Boston, be requested to preach the Sermon, and that Rev. John Todd, D. D., of Pittsfield, be appointed as substitute.

COMMITTEES.

The Nominating Committee reported as follows:

Committee on the State of the Country, — to report at the next meeting.—Rev. William A. Stearns, D. D., of Amherst; Rev. Samuel T. Seelye, D. D., of Easthampton; and Bro. Charles Hurlbut, of Roxbury.

Committee to attend the Temperance Convention,—with power to appoint Substitutes.—Rev. John P. Cleveland, D. D., of Mattapoisett; Rev. Nathaniel H. Eggleston, of Stockbridge; Rev. Elihu P. Marvin, D. D., of Medford; Rev. J. Jay Dana, of Becket; Rev. Charles Lord, of Buckland; Bro. J. P. Williston, of Northampton; and Bro. David Choate, of Essex.

Committee on the Union of the Conference with the General Association of Massachusetts.—Rev. Joshua W. Wellman, of Newton; Rev. Alonzo H. Quint, D. D., of New Bedford; Rev. Daniel T. Fiske, D. D., of Newburyport; Bro. William B. Washburn, of Greenfield; and Bro. Reuben A. Chapman, of Springfield.

State Committee on Home Evangelization.—Re-appointed.—Rev. William Barrows, of Reading; Rev. James T. McCollom, of Medford; Rev. Henry M. Dexter, D. D., of Boston; Bro. William Thurston, of Newburyport; and Bro. Marshall S. Scudder, of Grantville.

This Report was accepted and adopted.

VOTE OF THANKS.

On motion of Rev. Nahum Gale, D. D., of Lee, it was

Resolved, That the Conference presents its hearty thanks to Dr. Eddy and the people of his charge; to the Edwards church and congregation, of Northampton, for their generous hospitality and assiduous efforts for our comfort; to the First Parish, for the use of their house of worship; and to the Choir, for their aid in the service of song.

Rev. Dr. Eddy made an appropriate response.

REPORT ON THE STATE OF RELIGION.

Voted, That the Report on the State of Religion, sent by the Statistical Secretary, be referred to the Publishing Committee.

PUBLISHING COMMITTEE.

Voted, That the Secretaries and the Treasurer of the Conference, be a Publishing Committee, and that the Minutes of the Conference, the Essays read, the Report on Home Evangelization, and the Report on the State of Religion, be placed in their hands and printed.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF HOME EVANGELIZATION.

The Report on Home Evangelization was presented by the Secretary, Rev. Daniel P. Noyes, and accepted, and after remarks by Bro. B. P. Smith, of New York; Rev. Samuel G. Buckingham, of Springfield; Bro. J. Russell Bradford, of Rexbury; and Rev. Nahum Gale, D. D., of Lee, the following Statement was adopted:

STATEMENT.

1. It is the duty of the churches to cover the entire area of the State with a permanent, methodical, Christian inspection and care. To which end,—

2. It is important that every church, as was recommended by the last General Conference, define its territorial parish; taking the term as designating the district within which, either solely, or jointly with neighbor churches, it holds itself accountable to use its best endeavors, in behalf not only of all persons connected with its own congregation, but also all who are connected with none.

3. The churches should find a way, by means of Branch Sunday Schools, Neighborhood Meetings, Christian Visitation, or otherwise, to reach all out-districts, so that there shall be no neglected places in Massachusetts.

4. It is of vital importance to the success of the churches in their local work, that pastors more generally institute arrangements for the thorough training of persons for the office of teachers in the Sunday school, and also for the more responsible office of *Lay-Helpers* in the work of evangelization.

Voted, That the State Committee on Home Evangelization is hereby requested to continue its labors, receiving the co-operation of persons interested in the cause, as members of the Committee, so far as may prove desirable and practicable.

ADJOURNMENT.

Voted, That the Conference adjourn, *sine die*, at the close of the afternoon services.

The Minutes were read and approved.

The Conference then adjourned to meet at two o'clock for public worship and the observance of the Lord's Supper.

CLOSING EXERCISES.

Thursday Afternoon.—At two o'clock the Conference assembled, according to adjournment, when a Sermon was preached by Rev. William Barbour, of South Danvers,—Text, John xv. 9:—"As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you." The introductory services were conducted by Rev. David Trumbull, of Valparaiso, S. A. After the Sermon, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was celebrated, Rev. William Patton, D. D., of New Haven, Ct., and Rev. George P. Tyler, D. D., of Brattleboro', Vt., officiating. After which the Conference adjourned, *sine die*.

S. T. SEELYE, *Moderator*.

JAMES P. KIMBALL, *Scribe*.

A true copy of the Minutes.

Attest, JOSHUA W. WELLMAN,
Recording Secretary.

CONSTITUTION.

1. This body shall be called the GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES IN MASSACHUSETTS.

2. The object of this Conference is to secure Christain union, fellowship and intercourse among the churches; to promote spirituality; incite to a more elevated piety, and stimulate Christians to greater activity and efficiency in advancing the Redeemer's kingdom.

3. This Conference shall, under no circumstances, exercise eccelesiastical authority, or interfere with the government or discipline of the churches, or consent to hear appeals, or give advice in eccelesiastical causes of any kind.

4. Each Local Conference, composed of evangelical Congregational Churches within the State, may appoint five delegates to attend the annual meeting of the Conference, two of whom shall be pastors of churches, and three lay members.

5. The officers of the Conference shall be a Moderator, a Recording Secretary, a Statistical Secretary, and a Treasurer.

6. The Moderator shall be chosen by ballot from among the delegates present, and shall preside during the meeting for which he is chosen.

7. The Secretaries and Treasurer shall be chosen by ballot, and continue in office three years; and they shall be *ex officiis* members of the Conference.

8. The Recording Secretary shall keep a fair record of the doings of each meeting, in a book to be kept for that purpose, which shall be transmitted to his successor in office.

9. The Statistical Secretary shall collect and arrange such statistics as the Conference may order; shall distribute all documents received for the use of the Conference, or printed by them; and shall preserve a copy of all the publications of the Conference.

10. The Treasurer shall receive all money raised for the use of the Conference, disburse the same as directed, and present an annual report, audited as the Conference may direct.

11. Any ordained pastor or member of a Congregational Church within the bounds of the State, shall be eligible to the offices of Secretary, Statistical Secretary and Treasurer.

12. The Conference may receive delegates from other State evangelical religious bodies, representing Congregational Churches, who shall be considered honorary members, and be admitted to the privilege of participating in the deliberations of the meeting, but shall not be allowed to vote; and the Conference may reciprocate the courtesy by appointing delegates to such bodies.

13. Twenty-five regularly appointed delegates shall constitute a quorum.

14. The Conference shall hold an Annual Meeting on the second Tuesday in September, at such place as shall be designated, to commence at four o'clock, or other more convenient hour, in the afternoon, and to close at four o'clock in the afternoon of the Thursday following.

15. A Sermon shall be preached on the evening of the first day of the meeting; and another, adapted to the occasion, on the afternoon of the last day, to be followed by the Lord's Supper, to be administered generally without remarks; and the ministers who preach the sermons shall be *ex officiis* members of the Conference.

16. Brief narratives of the state of religion within the bounds of Local Conferences, shall be presented in writing to a Committee appointed to receive them, which shall be embodied in a Report and read by the Committee, at such time as the Conference may appoint.

17. Other services of the Conference shall consist of devotional exercises, addresses and discussions upon subjects of practical religious interest, together with the objects of benevolent enterprise sustained by the churches, to be provided for and arranged as shall be laid down in the By-Laws.

18. The Conference shall establish By-Laws and Rules of Order for the regulation of its business, which shall be adopted by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any annual meeting.

19. Any proposition to alter or amend a By-Law shall be made at the annual meeting previous to the one at which it is acted upon.

20. Any article of this Constitution may be altered or amended by a two-thirds vote, at any annual meeting, provided that the proposition is made at any previous annual meeting, excepting that *article third* shall be held unalterable.

BY-LAWS.

1. At the appointed hour of meeting, the Pastor of the Church where the meeting is held shall call to order; the certificates of delegates shall be immediately presented to the Recording Secretary, and a quorum being declared present, a Moderator shall be chosen.

2. The Moderator shall open the meeting with devotional exercises, and at the opening of each subsequent session, shall appoint some person to offer prayer.

3. A Committee of three shall be appointed to act as a Committee of Arrangements.

4. At each meeting, a Provisional Committee, of five persons, shall be appointed to arrange the schedule for the subsequent meeting; to designate the place, and to nominate a preacher for the opening sermon.

5. The preacher of the sermon before the communion, shall be chosen by the Local Conferences, in alphabetical order.

6. In order to separate the business from the religious services, special times shall be designated, at which all business of the Conference shall be transacted.

7. Whenever it shall appear to the Committee appointed to embody the narratives of the state of religion, that the religious condition within any Local Conference justifies a more detailed recital, a delegate from every such Conference may make verbal statements to the meeting, under the direction of the Committee.

8. The Conference shall determine, by vote, what objects of Christian benevolence may from time to time be presented, and the particular objects to be presented at any meeting shall be determined by the Provisional Committee.

9. The Constitution and By-Laws shall be read near the opening of the session, on the second day.

10. When a report is made, the question shall be, "Shall the report be accepted?" If resolutions are appended, the question may be divided at the request of any member, and the vote taken separately on accepting the report, and on accepting the resolutions.

11. The motion for the "previous question" shall be put without debate, and if carried, the main question shall be immediately put.

12. The Conference shall observe the usual rules of order in deliberative bodies, in all cases where it has no special rule of its own.

13. Before adjournment, the minutes of the meeting shall be read for approval.

REPORT ON THE STATE OF RELIGION

IN THE

CHURCHES CONNECTED WITH THE CONFERENCE.

By vote of the General Conference at its session of 1865, it was declared to be the duty of the Statistical Secretary to prepare the Narrative of the State of Religion, from reports to be sent to him before the meeting of the Conference.

In accordance with that vote, I sent circulars to the Scribes of Conferences, asking for information upon several specified points, and upon the general topics. The circulars were purposely sent at a late date, that the report might be brought as near the time of assembling as possible; supposing, also, that the vote of the last Conference would be in mind. But I am satisfied that this was a mistake, and that it will be better another year, to ask the reports at an earlier date, even at the loss of the latest facts.

A large portion of the Conferences are, however, well reported at this time. They refer, specially, to facts regarding Meeting-houses, Church Debts Paid, Temperance, Home Evangelization, and Revivals. The latter will be found to be of deep interest to every Christian, and sure to cause humble and devout gratitude to the Giver of these blessed mercies.

An examination of the reports has satisfied me that it is better to give full extracts in their own language, rather than to re-write, and thus destroy their freshness; and also that it is better to present the report of each locality by itself, rather than to gather all the facts of one item into a single section.

Beginning at the Southeastern part of the State, we find Barnstable Conference, covering Cape Cod. The Conference numbers twenty-one churches, all but two of which are regularly supplied with ministerial labor. From this Conference we have the following:—

"The year has been one long to be remembered by the churches in Falmouth, Yarmouth, and Barnstable; while some others have experienced mercy drops in the conversion of a few, and in the revival of the spirit of prayer. The revival in Falmouth commenced early in the Spring, in connection with meetings held one day each week, alternately with the four churches. These meetings consisted of preaching, in connection with conference and prayer. The means were largely blessed in the conversion of

sinners. Many aged men, as well as large numbers from the Sabbath Schools, have already been gathered into the church.

"In Yarmouth the interest commenced somewhat earlier than in Falmouth, first developing itself among some of the younger members of the Sabbath School, and continuing to increase without much extra help outside of the services of pastor and church, till upwards of seventy indulged hope in Christ. Men of grey hairs here too, have for the first time honored their divine Master by lifting their voices in prayer, and by uniting with his people. At West Barnstable the church was mourning over eighteen years' absence of the Spirit in its special converting power. This is the oldest church in the State, organized in London in 1616, brought over soon after the settlement of Plymouth, and re-organized at Barnstable where it has since remained unmoved, constantly uttering its voice for the truth; the timbers of its first church edifice still remaining as a part of the new, and apparently as sound at the age of one hundred and sixty years as the church itself appears in the faith—aged more than two hundred years. The revival here commenced late in the Spring. The pastor was assisted by Mr. Nichols, an evangelist. The church is very much revived, and some forty souls were converted. It is believed that in all the churches where interest is reported not less than four hundred have embraced a hope in Christ. Our Sabbath Schools are in a flourishing condition; they hold a large place in the hearts of the churches. Nothing of marked interest in the Temperance cause, but we hope a steady advance. Home Evangelization has been discussed very fully in our Conferences, and some work is being done.

"The church in Chatham has commenced removing its Meeting-house to the centre of the village, and erecting it in the modern style.

"The church edifice in Harwich Port is also receiving a recess for the pulpit and fresco on its walls.

"The churches that have had revivals, are as follows: —

"West Barnstable; Falmouth, First Church; Falmouth, East Church; Falmouth, North Church; Falmouth, Waquoit Church; Yarmouth, First Church. Hyannis and Harwich Centre have also been somewhat revived."

The Pilgrim Conference includes the churches of Plymouth and vicinity.

"The Pilgrim Conference is able to report (says the Scribe) no extensive work of grace within its limits during the past year. A few mercy drops have fallen, and two or three of the churches have received a few additions, as the result of a slightly increased religious interest. The Temperance cause has made little progress. Very little effort has been made directly for its promotion. About the usual zeal has been manifested in sustaining Sabbath schools. The work of Home Evangelization has received a new impulse. Secretary Noyes has visited the Conference, and his labors have awakened a new interest in this work."

Old Colony Conference joins Barnstable upon the west. No report has been furnished. But the following facts are known to the Secretary:

The churches are all enjoying a fair degree of prosperity. One only is

without a pastor, that at South Dartmouth. The First Church, New Bedford, which is in the little village of Acushnet, has almost completed, by great exertions and some outside help, a very handsome and suitable edifice, in place of one destroyed by fire. In several churches there have been revivals of more or less power. The churches in New Bedford have enjoyed a great degree of favor in this particular. The most marked instances are the church in Fairhaven, and the North church, New Bedford, in both of which there have been decided outpourings of God's mercy. In the North church, New Bedford, a gentle but strong interest began early in the spring, and was continued for several months in conversions. It is thought that at least sixty or seventy will prove truly converted to God. The churches of this Conference, and the churches of the State, have met with a sad loss in the death of Rev. Timothy Stowe. A faithful minister, a devoted pastor, a wise counsellor, a thorough Christian,—his influence was far-reaching and deep. He died in peace.

Taunton Conference embraces the churches from Taunton to Fall River. It reports as follows:

For the central part, the Scribe says: "The churches included in this report have not been blessed with *revivals* so marked and positive as in some other parts of the State. During the spring there was an awakening, more or less evident in all these churches. The increase of attendance in the prayer meetings, both of church members and non-professors, indicated it, and the prayers were more direct and fuller of meaning and desire. A few conversions occurred. In the Winslow church, Taunton, several young men came to their pastor by night, one after another, to inquire the way, and as they successively found it, were drawn together, and established a private Sabbath morning prayer meeting, into which they invited others. This meeting still continues, and has maintained its interest and privacy through the summer. This is the more noteworthy, as the church, as a body, has not indicated any special awakening, or knowledge of the silent way of the Spirit.

"The *Temperance* cause presents no marked aspects. There may be a growing resolution to sustain and encourage the State constabulary in seizing liquors. There is room enough for increased zeal and labor. *Home Evangelization* has secured considerable attention. The suggestions of the Advisory Committee have been adopted and partly executed. A committee of four has been appointed to preach on the subject in all the churches, who have mostly performed their duty. The results of this movement cannot be stated until the report of that committee shall be presented, at the next meeting of Conference. Some of the churches have established prayer meetings in outlying districts. Some have constituted Standing Committees, with full powers to arrange for such meetings and take charge of them. There is a great want of conception of the magnitude and importance of this work, and a consequent want of vigorous, conscientious labor to accomplish it. No meeting-house has been built, rebuilt or destroyed. Some have been repaired or refitted, with various amounts of expenditure. It is not known that any of the churches included in this report have any debts remaining. These were, what were left of

them, liquidated a year or more ago, when the general fashion was to free the house of the Lord from human mortgages."

From other parts are the following:

"During the past year the Congregational church in Somerset, through the indefatigable efforts of its acting pastor, Rev. William H. Bessom, obtained from the neighboring churches, from generous Christians in various places, and from the Congregational Union, the means for completing its beautiful sanctuary, which was dedicated last December, Rev. Eli Thurston, D. D., of Fall River, preaching the dedication sermon. Its zealous pastor, however, speedily removed to another sphere of labor. The church has secured as his successor, Rev. Nelson Clark, in whom all seem to be united, and whose ministrations, there is reason to hope, will be highly useful. By the recent completion of the railroad passing through it, Somerset has now direct railway communication with Boston, and is on one of the principal lines of communication between Boston and New York. Situated at the head of navigation for largest vessels on Taunton river, it is no doubt destined to a considerable growth, and it is therefore highly gratifying that the church of our forefathers should be so well established in it.

"The Central Congregational church in Dighton during the past year has spent nearly $800 in improvements upon and around its sanctuary. The Sabbath school and the congregation have been larger than in any previous year. A great many neighborhood meetings have been held in various parts of the parish, which have been well attended. Special efforts for the promotion of religion were engaged in last winter, which were greatly blessed to the church, though resulting in but few conversions. In the spring of 1864, a powerful revival doubled the members of this church, since which time it has continued to sustain three evening meetings a week, as well as in various other ways to exhibit the deep and permanent influence of that work of grace.

"The church in West Taunton has enjoyed a year of more than ordinary spiritual prosperity. Series of meetings were held last winter, in which the pastor was assisted by the neighboring ministers. Much interest was felt in them. Many members of the church were greatly revived. The church and society, as well as the Sabbath school, are increasing in efficiency and strength.

"The church in Rehoboth is prospering under the faithful preaching of its earnest, devoted pastor, Rev. F. H. Boynton. Mr. B. was one of the ministers appointed by the Taunton Conference, at its annual meeting, to preach to the churches on the subject of Home Evangelization. Besides performing this work with great zeal and ability, he has sedulously striven among his own people to impress upon them their duty towards the neglecters of the sanctuary around them, and to urge on, in all the paths of Christian activity, those who entered the service of the Lord in the recent revival under his ministry.

"The church in Seekonk continues to enjoy the affectionate counsels and instructions of its warm-hearted and aged pastor, who was installed over them more than forty years ago. Peaceful and harmonious within, it pur-

sues its course of noiseless usefulness, with few changes or startling events to relate, and with almost none to deplore.

"For a long period the church in East Attleboro' has been in a divided, unhappy condition, but all its differences seem now to be composed, and a spirit of Christian harmony and love to prevail. For a considerable time the church has depended on stated supplies as well as heard many candidates for settlement, but recently it has secured and installed a pastor, Rev. Francis N. Peloubet, to whom all appear equally attached. His labors have been greatly blessed to the spiritual good of Christians, as well as to the conversion of the impenitent. The church is in a greatly revived state, and seems ready to do the work pertaining to so large a society in the very important field where it is placed. The attendance on the Sabbath services is very large, the choir has been reorganized and greatly improved, the salary of the pastor much exceeds that paid to any of his predecessors, and in all respects the church appears to be in a most flourishing condition.

"The church in Raynham has spent in the repair of its meeting-house, $2,200. Its benevolent contributions have been larger than in any previous year. The Temperance cause is prospering. We look for a blessed work of grace soon.

"In North Middleboro', a pleasing work of grace has been in progress for some time. The Sabbath school is prospering, the congregations increasing, and the prospects are good.

"Scotland parish, (Bridgewater,) has experienced a very interesting work of grace the past winter and spring, and matters there are in a very hopeful condition.

"We are moving in the matter of Home Evangelization stronger and stronger in our Conference, and are about to strike harder for Temperance."

From Norfolk, no report has been received. It is known, however, that a better state of religious interest has prevailed than has been known for many years. All the Sabbath Schools, except two or three, have been blessed with conversions. On the First Church in North Bridgewater, and in Campello, God has poured out his Spirit copiously.

No report has come from Boston and vicinity. From data in the hands of the Secretary of the General Association, it appears that the churches in Suffolk North are unusually prosperous. God has done great things for them. Nearly all have enjoyed spiritual refreshing. The churches in Chelsea and Charlestown report powerful revivals. Professors of religion have, in many instances, received new life and spirituality; and converts have been multiplied. Large additions are made to the churches. One church received fully one hundred. Sabbath schools are receiving increased attention. These churches are establishing Mission Sabbath schools. They think, all things considered, they never had greater reason to thank God and take courage.

To the churches of South Suffolk the past year has been one of great prosperity. Those which have been most especially visited by the Spirit of God are the Eliot and Vine Street churches in Roxbury; Phillips church, South Boston; Eliot and Second churches, Newton; Trinitarian Congregational church, Waltham; Harvard church, Brookline; Mather church, Jamaica Plain; Shawmut church, Park Street church, Mt. Vernon church, and Essex Street church, Boston. The Shawmut church, Boston, have built a commodious chapel, and the Eliot church, Newton, have paid a debt of $10,000 and enlarged their mission chapel.

Of Essex South Conference, it is said: —

"Many revivals of religion are reported from this Conference. In several of the churches the Divine Spirit has wrought with great power, and many of all ages and classes have been added to the saved. In the Dane Street church, Beverly, over one hundred have been under religious concern; about seventy have united with the church. Maple Street church, Danvers, can report an equal interest and about the same number of conversions. There, the whole Sabbath School was awakened.

"First Church, Rockport, has added largely to its membership.

"About twenty conversions have occurred in the South Church, South Danvers; a great yet efficient blessing has come on that congregation, although no general revival can be reported. More or less religious interest has been manifested in the following churches, extra meetings have been held, and some increase in membership has been received:—Hamilton; Saugus Centre; Washington Street, Beverly; First Church, Lynn; (though not numbered in our Conference, yet within its bounds;) the Crombie Street church, Salem.

"The cause of the Gospel has manifestly advanced among us. Though many of the churches have served the Lord by standing and waiting, they have waited in hope. Not a church is known which has not desired a blessing, and put forth a certain amount of effort to attain it.

"Our contributions to the Christian charities have largely increased. Many churches never gave so much as they have done during the past year. Our schools flourish. If intemperance still continues, it does not hold its way unopposed. Yet, we regret that higher Christian ground is not taken by some of our temperance societies outside the Christian church. In this district, at a Temperance Convention, a resolution was *opposed* which simply cautioned all Temperance organizations 'to do nothing in their meetings inconsistent with a pure Christian morality.'

"As our annual reports on the state of religion are not made till our October meeting, this sketch is necessarily fragmentary. The report is within the truth in regard to revival interest, and it is only through a fear of making an uncertain return that the scribe does not increase the list of the churches blessed."

In Essex North, "Three churches have been favored with the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit."

The following are the principal facts touching the late revival in West Amesbury:

"The work began, so far as it was visible and publicly recognized, with our observance of 'the Week of Prayer' in January. There had, however, for months previous, been going on in individual hearts a silent preparation for it, and a deeply earnest feeling that we *must* secure a blessing. Outside the church the interest was first manifest among the young,—the first eighteen or twenty cases being members of the Sabbath school, whose ages varied from fourteen to twenty-four. After the fourth week, the work began to reach and soon rapidly extended among an older class,—heads of families, business men, and others, so that, ere long, the great majority who attended the meetings for inquiry, were persons of middle age, and quite a number past it, several being from sixty to seventy-five years of age, and more men than women.

"The revival was conducted without the aid of evangelists, and, with the exception of two or three Sabbaths, and three or four evening meetings, without even *help* from outside the parish.

"Most of the meetings during the week were conducted by the brethren of the churches, and the time was fully occupied by prayer, singing and exhortations,—all short, except that the pastor almost invariably closed the exercises by remarks occupying on an average about fifteen minutes. The preaching on the Sabbath was a simple, plain, earnest and pointed presentation of the great, heart-searching and humbling truths of the Gospel.

"About one hundred and forty persons attended the inquiry meeting. I think I may safely say that at least one hundred of these give evidence more or less clear of a saving change. About thirty new family altars have been erected. Thus far seventy have been admitted into the church. Others are expected hereafter."

"Amesbury Mills.—During the Spring months an interest sprung up, gradually, resulting in some twenty or more hopeful conversions. Union meetings were held with other evangelical denominations. The pastor, Bro. Rand, represents the church as in a good working condition, and says, 'I am anticipating another refreshing this coming winter.'

"Amesbury and Salisbury Union Evangelical Church.—From February till the present time there has been a very quiet religious interest. There have been during this period some twenty-five hopeful conversions. Nine of these have united with the church, and others are expected to do so soon. The pastor writes: 'We have had few extra meetings, except a young ladies' weekly prayer meeting, which sprung up in connection with the interest, and is still well sustained.' In several other churches there were, early in the year, hopeful indications of a revival, which soon passed away, disappointing the hopes they had awakened.

"Concerning the temperance movement we have nothing new to report. The condition of our Sabbath schools is about as usual. A committee was appointed by our Conference to co-operate with the State Committee on Home Evangelization, but not much else has been done.

"The new church at Georgetown are just commencing to build a meeting house."

All the churches belonging to the Middlesex South Conference, with but one or two exceptions, have enjoyed an unusual degree of religious interest during the past winter. "In some places this interest has been confined almost entirely to professing Christians, so that while the church has been quickened, few or none have been converted. This was the case in Wayland. Old feuds of years' standing, between members of the church, have been made up, and the church is now in a better condition than it has been for years, while only one has been added to our number, as the result of the interest during the winter. In Dover, nine have been gathered in, a large number, when we know it forms about a third of the whole membership. In Framingham, there have been 'ten well authenticated conversions, and some other doubtful ones.' In Hopkinton, twenty-five have been received to the church as a result of the Spirit's presence during the winter. Three were added to the church in Lincoln, this spring, one of them a case of exceeding interest; an Englishman who, until a stormy evening last winter, had never been to a prayer meeting. In Marlboro,' twenty-two have united with the church on profession of their faith. The new and feeble church in Southville were greatly encouraged and strengthened by a strong addition to their numbers. The church in Assabet has almost doubled its numbers, I think, during the year. In Sudbury, the converts number about twenty; thirteen have already united with the church, and others are to follow at the next communion.

"Most of the churches have taken hold of the work of Home Evangelization so lately, that we can hardly report. Meetings begun last winter in New Boston, a district in Framingham, resulted in much good, seemingly, and have been continued until the present time. The Marlboro' church have gone to work systematically, but results have yet to show themselves. A congregation has been gathered in a village of Concord, and it is expected a church will soon be formed there.

"The Sabbath Schools are in a flourishing condition.

"I do not think the cause of temperance has lost ground in any place; in some places it has gained.

"All the churches are in a good financial condition, none are I think in debt."

Most of the churches in Mendon Conference have been visited by the special influences of the Holy Spirit. In no instance has there been undue excitement or appliance of extra means other than those divinely appointed. The churches revived are in West Medway, East Medway, some conversions in Medway Village, and in Franklin. Wrentham and Foxborough have shared to some extent in the good work.

Of the nineteen churches connected with the Brookfield Associational Conference, all but three have pastors, one of which, Oakham, has but recently dismissed its pastor, the other two, (Holland and Dana,) have stated supplies. Three report, during the year, revivals; New Braintree, for the first time in twenty-five years, chiefly among the young. The churches in Ware East, and also in Barre, report revivals—in Barre, some very

young children, say ten years old. Other churches speak of a good degree of interest, (Dudley especially.) There have been two new church enterprises, started or brought to the point of regular preaching, during the year. In West Warren, a church has been formed, under good prospects of success, with twenty members, helped now by the Home Missionary Society, but will probably not long need such help; people much interested—revival in progress, at date of meeting of Conference. In Gilbertville, "a manufacturing village in Hardwick, where neighboring pastors have preached for some time, on Sabbath evenings, there has recently been settled a stated preacher; and it is hoped a church will be formed ere long. Sabbath school reports generally good—growing interest in Home Evangelization, or Popular Christianization. Sabbath schools have been started, and neigborhood prayer-meetings maintained."

In Worcester North Conference "there have been two revivals during the year. The one was in the church in Ashburnham. It was a work of great interest and power, beginning with the 'week of prayer,' continuing between two and three months, prevailing mainly among adults, being marked in the character of its subjects, and resulting in the hopeful conversion of nearly forty souls. Thirty-three have already been received to the church.

"The other revival was enjoyed by the church in South Royalston. The Spirit came suddenly down during the winter, and for a few weeks there was a powerful work, as the fruits of which about fifteen conversions are reported.

"In several other churches of the Conference there was an unusual degree of interest, a few souls passing from death to life, but no other churches report what is commonly designated as a *revival.*

"*Temperance Cause.*—The cause of Temperance, on the whole, is advaning. There has been a *Temperance revival* in several places, new organizations for the promotion of the cause having been instituted.

"*Sabbath Schools.*—These are unusually prosperous in most instances. The number in attendance upon them is increasing, and a growing interest is felt in the institution.

"*Home Evangelization.*—The churches, generally, have not taken hold of this work; but the subject was brought before the Conference, and a committee on Home Evangelization was appointed. It is hoped that this committee will stir up the churches to do their duty in this regard. Two or three of the churches have taken hold of the work systematically, and mean to prosecute it thoroughly.

"*Meeting-houses.*—None have been built, or rebuilt, or destroyed, during the year, so far as information has come to me.

"*Church Debts.*—I have never heard that there are any such debts in this Conference, still there may be. Nor do I know that any have been paid this year."

The history of the churches in Franklin County, the past year, has been one of mingled light and shade. "Upon some, God has sent 'the small

rain,' upon others, 'the great rain of his strength.' The church at Sunderland has been visited with a remarkable outpouring of the Spirit. Over one hundred conversions are reported, embracing all classes and ages. Some fifty or more have united with the church. A good degree of interest still continues. The churches at South Deerfield have united within the year, now constituting one,—the old ministers being dismissed. They have now a pastor elect. The largest of the meeting-houses has been enlarged, remodelled, and finished with excellent taste. For weeks past there has been a great religious interest, and a large number (perhaps thirty or more,) hopeful conversions. The interest still continues. The church at Whately is enlarging and remodelling its house of worship. A pastor has been settled at Shelburne Falls, and under his ministry there have been a number of hopeful conversions and additions to the church, probably from twelve to fifteen. The church at Montague has been blessed with a quiet and encouraging work of grace, resulting in the hopeful conversion of fifteen or twenty. The gentle influences of the Spirit, resulting in individual cases of conversion, have been felt in many places within our bounds, of which we may name Warwick, Colerain, Buckland and Bernardston.

"The feeble churches,—of which we have not a few,—are prizing the Gospel more highly, and making more strenuous efforts for its support. The high price of all the necessaries of life is compelling a most rigid economy on the part of ministers, and in some cases threatening a dissolution of the pastoral relation. In regard to Sabbath schools there is little to distinguish the past year from those which have preceded it. Some organized effort has been made on behalf of the Temperance cause, with encouraging results. Some of the churches, as Sunderland, Montague, South Deerfield, Conway and Buckland, are doing something in the way of Home Evangelization."

The state of religion within Hampden Conference has been unusually healthful. "Without general or powerful revivals, a quiet earnestness and thoughtfulness has pervaded the churches, with gradual and continual accessions by conversions. The church in Ludlow was revived to a marked degree in the fall and winter.

"The Temperance Reform has aroused a new interest, calling the people together on frequent occasions, especially in Eastern Hampden. While in the public mind at large, there remains a general torpor, it seems to be the growing conviction of Christian people, that with the alarming increase of drinking customs, the reform should be established on a more thoroughly Christian basis.

"The Sabbath school enterprise is concentrating fresh enthusiasm and more solid results. The identity of the Sabbath school with the church, is becoming more practically understood. The State Convention in Springfield, last June, was remarkable for its tenderness of Christian spirit, and for its unifying and vitalizing impulses. The churches are more carefully and zealously infolding their Sabbath schools, as divine methods, not only for feeding the lambs, but for permeating adult minds with a more general

and accurate knowledge of the Bible. A Sabbath school missionary is employed under the auspices of the American Sunday School Union to survey the destitute places of the County and gather new Sabbath schools, and to revive and strengthen the weak.

"The work of Home Evangelization is personally and vigorously prosecuted by our County missionary, Rev. W. C. Foster, who, under the direction of a committee of the Conference, is constantly employed in visiting the waste places and more feeble churches. His labors have been blessed by numerous conversions, the reclaiming of backsliders, the revival of household religion and neighborhood prayer-meetings, and the encouragement and reinvigoration of weak churches. His reports and suggestions are useful to the stronger churches, by way of information, and by stirring up their minds to assist in the work of Home Evangelization. The importance of this work is growing in our minds, it is a standing topic of discussion at our annual Conferences, and it is infusing our Christian life with fresh vitality. It necessitates more direct and personal methods of Christian work, and a more intimate Christian fellowship between the churches.

"The Olivet church, Springfield, has paid its debt. The church in Blandford is repairing the old meeting-house, having raised a very generous subscription, and is going forward with other signs of promise. Others among our weaker churches might be specified, as encouraged and hopeful. The 'Memorial church,' Springfield, (colonized in great part from the North church,) was organized, 29th October, 1865. Their church edifice is in process of building."

Hampshire East Conference reports: —

"There have been revivals of unusual interest and power in Amherst College, Mt. Holyoke Female Seminary, South Amherst and Leverett; special religious interest also in North Hadley, attended by several conversions, some of them of peculiar interest. The Temperance cause is somewhat revived. A Hampshire East society has been formed, and several meetings held—the Secretary of the State society being present and giving much light and life to them. There was a Fourth of July Temperance Celebration by the Sabbath Schools of Hampshire East, at Amherst, attended by a large number, encouraging our hope. The officers of the law, I am happy to know, have been disturbing the quiet of the liquor sellers, in some places, considerably. It is my expectation that those who persist in this base business, will find it necessary to be careful, or suffer the penalty. I think," says the Scribe, "that our Sabbath Schools are sustained, generally, with unabated—in some cases, much increased—interest.

"Some special efforts are being made in the work of Home Evangelization. I do not yet learn of any very marked results; some additions have been made to our Sabbath congregations and schools by it.

"No new meeting-houses built. That at South Hadley Falls has been elevated, remodelled, renovated within and without, surmounted by a beautiful spire, at an expense, I think, of five or six thousand dollars. That at North Hadley, also, has been renovated, within and without, a recess

built and a new organ placed in it, all at an expense of not far from four thousand dollars, and paid for. Our churches, generally, are free from debt, and enjoy a good degree of harmony and prosperity. Many pastors and members are praying, laboring, looking and waiting for still richer blessings."

Berkshire County gives no report, but some of the churches in Berkshire North have been blessed by a refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Of these favored churches are the First and South in Pittsfield. Also in North and South Adams, and in Williamstown. About forty students in Williams College are supposed to have been converted. Lanesborough and Windsor have shared in the good work. In these churches it is estimated that nearly three hundred conversions have taken place.

Berkshire South is not reported. But the good work of the Lord has been experienced in South Egremont, Housatonic, Lee, Monterey, New Marlboro', and in South Berkshire Institute.

From these extracts it will he seen that a remarkable degree of prosperity characterises the present condition of the churches. Several new church edifices have been built. Church debts have been paid in repeated instances; which, continuing the work of the past few years, has left very few churches now encumbered. Sabbath schools are flourishing. Indeed, this cause has probably never been in a more promising condition. Home Evangelization is receiving more and more attention, and exciting a deeper interest. The Temperance cause finds its most devoted supporters among our ministers and churches, who are unitedly its supporters. As to benevolence, reports from less than four hundred churches show contributions for objects outside of parish expenses, amounting to $390,000, indicating a sum of more than $400,000 contributed in the year 1865. The membership of the 493 churches of the State is now just about 76,000.

But chiefly we have great occasion to bless God for the revivals which have gladdened so many churches. It has been a year of revivals. Multitudes have been gathered in; churches have been strengthened, and pastors' hearts made to rejoice.

Nor does it appear that the deepened religious interest is ended. In many places it continues, tranquil and calm, and promising renewed ingatherings. May the Lord graciously fulfil such hopes, and bestow the blessings of the Holy Ghost.

Respectfully submitted,

ALONZO H. QUINT,
Statistical Secretary.

September 10, 1866.

ESSAY.

BY REV. MARK HOPKINS, D. D., OF WILLIAMSTOWN.

THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE LATTER DAYS.

In meeting, Brethren of the Conference, the request of your Committee, that I should prepare a paper on "The Outpouring of the Spirit in the Latter Days," I observe,

First, That our knowledge on this subject must be wholly from the Bible.

It is one thing to proceed on the ground of recognized uniformities, or laws of nature, assuming their continuance, and making deductions from them; and it is another to ascertain what a *person* will do. The first is science; the second must be known by revelation, and can never become science. Science may be required to ascertain the meaning of the revelation, but there can be no means of knowing certainly what a person will do except as he reveals it. Let a person *speak*, let us understand what he says, and then, if we can confide in his character and ability, we may have certainty,—a certainty as great as is possible for us; but the basis of it will be *faith*, and not science.

In ascertaining, however, what a person will do, we are not wholly confined to a direct revelation. If we know what he has done, we may, on the ground that he will be consistent with himself, infer what he will continue to do. In this way we may know, in general, that what God will do will be consistent with his character as wise and holy, but of times and seasons, of permissions and limitations of evil, we can know nothing.

We turn then to the Bible, to its direct assertions, and inferences from them.

If, as is commonly supposed, the threefold distinction in the Godhead, further referred to in the promised seed of the woman, is intimated by the mention of the Spirit of God in the very opening of the Bible, then have we there a clue to the work of the Spirit which may guide us in pursuing this subject. We are there told that "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Creation, origination, is distinctly the work of the Father. But matter having been originated and endowed with its various properties, the earth was still "without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep." Then "*the Spirit of God* moved upon the face of the waters." The materials and conditions being given, the office of the Spirit was *construction*. It was a great work to bring from darkness and chaos the light and order and beauty and life of this peopled planet. This, on the testimony, equally of geology and of the Bible, was

done by successive and orderly steps. For our purpose the question of time is not important. Whether the periods were longer or shorter, the work went on step by step, in that order of the conditioning and the conditioned, which, as I have shown elsewhere,* gives unity to the universe, and its rank to each of its divisions and parts, until, in view of it, as completed, God himself pronounced it "very good." Instead of beginning, as modern speculation supposes, with animalculæ, and working upwards towards perfection, the Bible account is that every thing was perfect as it came from the hand of God, and that there has since been deterioration and degradation. This finished work, through its successive steps, we should naturally suppose, was wrought by the same Spirit that "moved upon the face of the waters."

But when man fell, every thing came into new relations. Then was there a *moral* chaos, and the need, not only of construction, but of reconstruction. *Construction* and *reconstruction*—these, and what is implied in these, would seem to include the distinctive work of the Spirit as revealed in the Bible. The fall of man gave occasion for a work analogous to that already performed, less obtrusive and wholly beyond the sphere of sense, but far grander,—and now, the Spirit of God having for his object in this work the production of moral beauty and order, or holiness, becomes known as the *Holy Spirit*. This work, if we adopt the theory of Hugh Miller, is now going on in this, the seventh day of the creation, God's Sabbath, the last epoch of the formative and preparatory period, and is to go on till the final catastrophe, when the work shall be completed, and an eternal kingdom of righteousness and peace shall be established.

But as there were previous conditions and a ground for the first work of the Spirit furnished by God the Father, so were there a ground and conditions for his second work; but these were provided by the second Person of the Trinity. Hence, in foretelling the Saviour, Isaiah calls him "The Everlasting Father," or the Father of the Everlasting age, that is, as all commentators agree, of the eternal period of righteousness and peace ushered in by the Gospel. He furnished in his work of redemption the conditions necessary for reconstruction, just as the Father furnished in the work of creation the conditions necessary for construction. Accordingly, while we have indications of the working of the Spirit before the coming of Christ, they were slight, and only as he was the Spirit of Christ, as the prophets are said to have spoken "by the Spirit of Christ which was in them." His work, then, was only and wholly on the ground of the anticipated work of Christ, and so the dispensation of the Spirit, distinctively so called, could not be introduced till the work of Christ was completed. The Spirit was not given, because the Son of man was not yet glorified.

But Christ having ascended, his work having been thus accepted, the way was prepared for the descent of the Spirit, and the scene and work of the day of Pentecost were the opening of a dispensation as new and distinctive as any of the days of creation. That Spirit who descended and abode upon Christ in the form of a dove, and was given to him without measure, was thenceforth to have access to the whole race as the material for his

* Moral Science, Lect. III.

reconstructive agency. This gift of the Spirit, and the miraculous displays connected with it, are expressly said to have been the fulfilment of that prophecy, that in the last days God would pour out his Spirit on all flesh. But that this was the complete fulfilment of that prophecy, and not rather the opening of a new dispensation of which this gave the characteristics, no one supposes. From that time till this, the Spirit has been abroad in the earth; not, indeed, in his miraculous agency, which is incidental, and from its definition must be temporary, but as the author of individual conversions, of revivals of religion, and of that sanctifying agency which is indispensable to the upbuilding of the kingdom of God.

Of the dispensation thus introduced, and so long continued, we say: First, that its analogy with the work of the Spirit of God, in the construction of the first creation, would seem to require that it should go on to its completion. Step by step the first work went on till it was finished; why should not the second? That the work to be done is yet far from completion, all must admit; and if, as some suppose, the dispensation of the Spirit is to terminate soon and suddenly, and the state of righteousness and peace foretold in the Scriptures is to come by other means, the analogy will fail entirely. The constancy of God to his methods makes it difficult to conceive that the present method shall be superseded till the end shall come, and this whether we allow the analogy or not.

But it is to be observed, secondly, that the present agency is adequate to the production of the foretold results of the Gospel. To the power of the Spirit of God over the minds of men, consistently with their responsible agency, it is impossible for us to assign a limit. The conversion of three thousand men, situated as the Jews were, under one sermon, shows what may be done; and no man can have passed through a powerful revival of religion, and seen how marvellously the most stupid have been awakened, and the stoutest opposers have been subdued, and how the whole face and moral atmosphere of a community has been changed in a brief period, without feeling that, with a similar but enhanced agency, it would be the simplest and easiest thing possible to bring the whole world into subjection to God. Let this be done and what more can be desired? The millennium will have come. So long as men are to be converted and sanctified through the truth, it is difficult to conceive why there should be, or how there can be, any other method. The sword of the Spirit is sharp enough, and the might of the Spirit in wielding it is great enough to subdue the whole world.

In the third place, while we cannot claim to be adequate judges on such a point, it would seem to us that a suspension of the dispensation of the Spirit at, or near the present point, must fail to bring to Him due honor in that one great work which we know is to be accomplished.

In the fourth place, it would certainly disappoint an expectation naturally excited in the minds of Christians. This expectation is based on what Bishop Butler calls continuance. If we see a tree in the process of growth, we expect it will continue to grow till it reaches perfection. So in every work of nature and of art. And now, having seen the leaven begin its work, we expect it will leaven the whole lump; having seen the blade, we

expect to see the ear, and the full corn in the ear; having seen the stone cut out of the mountain without hands begin to increase, we expect to see it, and by the same process, become a great mountain and fill the whole earth.

In the fifth place, there are at the present time remarkable providential preparations, such as have never been known or approximated before, for a rapid diffusion of truth, and so for bringing all men, through the truth, and by the power of the Spirit, into sympathy with each other and into subjection to God. On these preparations I may not, and need not dwell. Both in prophecy and in fact, God has been wont to connect great physical with great moral changes; and the physical changes wrought by science in our day, the forces called into play and subjected to man are, as we know, well nigh miraculous, and in former times would have been regarded as fully so.

In the sixth place, many passages of Scripture favor this view.

The Saviour represented the presence of the Spirit as more desirable to the disciples than his personal presence. For the church at large this must have been, and must be so, since his personal presence would be local. Nor does it appear how his personal presence in any one place can ever be a substitute for that indwelling Spirit by which, under the new covenant, God says, "I will put my laws into their mind and write them in their heart, and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." The knowledge of the Lord can fill the earth as the waters cover the sea, only as every man is a temple of the Spirit and as that Spirit takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto him. It is, according to Isaiah, when 'the Spirit shall be poured upon us from on high, that the wilderness shall be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be counted for a forest, that judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field; and the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever.'

How plain, how simple is all this! How adequate the provision, how glorious the result! According to this, the pouring out of the Spirit in the latter days is yet to come, and is to result in universal peace and righteousness.

What, then, are the objections to this? In itself there are none. The agency is adequate; the result is adequate. The objections are from the Scriptures, which are supposed to inculcate a view incompatible with this. In this view, not the Spirit, but Christ, coming personally, is represented as the chief agent in the restoration of the world. The question really turns upon the relative agency of the Son and Spirit in this great work. By the coming of Christ the Jews, according to this view, are to be miraculously converted, and are to be restored under him as a separate and peculiarly favored people. In connection with this, the view is that the world is to grow worse instead of better till the coming of Christ, and that his coming, which is to be sudden, is to be preceded and accompanied by great convulsions and by great destruction of human life. The wicked

are to be destroyed and the personal reign of Christ is to commence at Jerusalem.

In this view there is much that is plausible in itself, and it is strongly supported by many passages of Scripture. It would seem fitting that Christ should come and wear the diadem of the whole earth on the very spot where he was crowned with thorns. The Scriptures speak in the strongest terms, terms which it would seem impossible to explain away, of the restoration of the Jews; they speak of the tares and the wheat as growing together till the harvest; of the perilous times and great wickedness of the last days, and of the suddenness, as of a thief in the night, with which the coming of our Lord shall overtake a slumbering and unprepared world. Moreover it seems the purpose of God to try men under all conditions, and there has been as yet in connection with Christianity, no trial on a large scale of democratic institutions, so loudly boasted. Under these we may indeed have churches, schools, free speech, a free press, general intelligence, a marvellous subjection of the forces of nature, boundless wealth, and a control by each of himself that shall secure the rights of all, thus realizing the bright visions of prophecy. On the other hand there are, in connection with such institutions, possibilities of the most perfect possible counterpart to the dark pictures in prophecy of the wickedness of the latter days. We may have, the indications often seem that we shall have, according to this view, we are to have, a godless science, a profligate literature, a sensualized art, anarchical freedom and blood to the horse-bridles. All this involves a system incompatible with the conversion of the world by truth and prayer and the augmented influences of the Spirit, and with the spiritual reign of Christ for a thousand years.

Of this scheme it cannot be said, as of the other, that there is no objection to it except from the Bible.

For, First, it may be objected that it does, as has been said, cut short and supersede the agency of the Spirit.

Secondly, That it offers a premium to the Jews for unbelief. According to this, by the very act of rejecting Christ, and so continuing Jews, the nation is to be an order of nobility in the kingdom of Christ. Said a missionary in India lately, "We shall be palanquin bearers to the Jews." How could a man with such a belief ask a Jew to become a Christian?

Thirdly, It would seem to be unjust to the descendants of converted Jews.

Multitudes of the Jews were converted on the day of Pentecost and subsequently. Where are their descendants now? Lost and undistinguishable among Christians. Some of us may be of the number. And shall the descendants of those Jews who followed the Lord Jesus and suffered the loss of all things for his sake be put below the descendants of those 'who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets,' and persecuted the Apostles, and pleased not God, and were contrary to all men, and continued this for eighteen centuries?

This view also seems opposed to the spirituality of the Gospel as breaking down all walls of partition, and to the Pauline conception of a Jew

often and strongly expressed. "So then," says the Apostle, "he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God." Again: "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed, not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, *who is the father of us all.*" And again: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, but ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's then are ye *Abraham's seed*, and heirs according to the promise."

Here it is to be observed that these spiritual views of Paul, so apparently conflict with numerous explicit prophecies, as to make the Jews seem an irreducible quantity, and that whoever can tell what is to be done with them, will have the key to this whole subject.

But once more, the view in question seems to necessitate the identification of the opening of the millennium with the day of judgment.

It would be incongruous for Christ to reign personally on the earth while it should yet bear marks of the curse. Where he *reigns*, there can be no sin, and no "pricking brier." This would require a renovation of the earth, and a restoration of it to its original state.

Besides, it is generally agreed that Christ is to come but once more, and that his second coming will be to judge the world. That would bring probation to a close. There would be thereafter neither marrying nor giving in marriage, and the members of God's family from the earth, would be made up. But if this is to take place at all within the period commonly supposed by those who hold the above view, the number of Christians will be relatively insignificant, and will not correspond with the representations of the Scriptures, in regard to the multitude of the redeemed.

Of the tendency of this view to discourage effort for missions, I say nothing. I think it has that tendency; still, if the view be correct, and that is the question, the tendency must be good.

A condensed and fair comparison of these two views, and of the grounds on which they rest, is a desideratum. The objections to the latter view, those mentioned and others that might be, have force; but it is difficult to see how many passages of Scripture, by which that view is supported, are to be explained away.

The time allowed for this Essay does not permit, its object as opening a discussion does not require, a further prosecution of the subject. In closing, I may be permitted to say:—

1. That in the work of the Spirit of God as constructive, and especially of the Holy Spirit as reconstructive, we see why the sin against the Holy Ghost is regarded as it is. It is a sin against the whole work of the *Godhead*, at the point where that work is reaching its highest result.

2. That we are sure there is to be a time of prosperity and triumph to the Church upon the earth. The Saviour shall reign king of *nations*, as he is king of saints. The knowledge of the Lord shall fill the *earth*, as the waters cover the sea.

3. That there are indications, if not of the approach of such a state, yet of great and rapid changes that may prepare the way. The metal begins to be fused.

4. That before such a state can be possible, the present relation of the conflicting forces must be changed. Coming in gradually or suddenly, in some way there must be more of the divine element. *God* must appear in his glory to build up Zion.

Hence 5th and finally, we need prayer, always prayer. For that which God must do, our only resource is in prayer. And as belief on this subject is not vital, we need, whether we can or cannot satisfy ourselves in regard to its mode, to pray and labor together in charity with all those who love the appearing of our Lord, in whatever form, "and so much the more, as we see the day approaching."

ESSAY.

BY PROF. WILLIAM S. TYLER, D. D., OF AMHERST.

REVIVALS OF RELIGION.

In selecting "Revivals of Religion," as the subject of one of the Essays to be read on this occasion, the Committee of Arrangements doubtless had some reference to the place in which the Conference was to be held. Whether the topic was suggested by the place, or not, it is certainly quite appropriate to "that enthusiastical town of Northampton," as President Edwards, more in the tone of justification than of apology, called it, which shared so largely in the blessings of the Great Awakening, in the middle of the last century, where indeed that remarkable season of religious interest began, somewhat more than a century and a quarter ago, and whose minister at that time stands forth without a peer, as the acknowledged representative and defender of the revivals, not less than the theology, of his age.

A revival of religion, as I understand it, and as it is commonly understood by evangelical Christians, is a season of unusual religious interest, the effect of supernatural divine influence, when the graces of Christians are quickened, sinners are awakened and converted, and additions are made to the church from the world, of such as, it is hoped, will be saved. It is not designated by this or any other technical name in the Scriptures. Yet the thing exists substantially, from beginning to end of sacred history. And the name is distinctly suggested and fully authorized by scriptural usage, from the earliest times; as, for instance, in the prayer of the Psalmist: "Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?" and that of the prophet: "O Lord, revive thy work, in the midst of the years." Indeed the whole history of religion, as it is recorded in the Bible, is a history of alternate seasons of declension and revival. And true religion has progressed in the world only by a succession of revivals,

so that the law of religious progress may be said to be essentially the law of Revivals of Religion.

The whole time allotted to this Essay, and more, might well be occupied with the illustration of this proposition. We can only indicate a brief outline of the history. And on the present occasion, we must omit, for want of time, the Bible history of revivals. You are familiar with that, both in the Old Testament and in the New; and the more you refresh your memories on the subject, the more you will be convinced that the history of both Testaments is, as I have said, substantially a history of declensions and revivals. We can only allude to the swelling tide of truth and grace which gradually spread Christianity throughout the Roman Empire, and then, after the fall of that empire, the successive waves of divine influence by which it was again propagated among the nations of Modern Europe—both of which were marked by all the essential characteristics of a modern revival of religion. We must pass over also the great Reformation of the sixteenth century,—which was a revival in all its principal features, and that too on the grandest scale,—together with the renovating and quickening influences which preceded it in the fifteenth century and those that followed it in the seventeenth. We must pass over all these, and come at once to the Great Awakening in the eighteenth century, which is most intimately connected in time and place and direct causative influence with the revivals of our own age, but with which, notwithstanding, Christians of our day are by no means familiarly acquainted.

This "Great Awakening" as it is commonly called now, though the writers of that age more frequently spoke of it as a revival, began under the ministry of Edwards, in Northampton, in 1734, and soon spread through Massachusetts and Connecticut, and ere long through all the United Colonies, reaching its height about 1740, but continuing with no small power through several subsequent years, not ceasing entirely till the French and Revolutionary wars in the latter part of the century, and extending in not a few of its blessed fruits to our own times. In his narrative of this revival, President Edwards expresses the hope that more than three hundred were brought home to Christ in Northampton, in the space of half a year. The whole population of the town was then but eleven hundred. As large an ingathering in proportion to the population now would amount to nearly two thousand. "We have," says President Edwards, "about six hundred and twenty communicants, which includes almost all our adult persons. I hope that by far the larger part of persons in this town, over sixteen years of age, are such as have a saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and so, by what I have heard, I suppose it is in some other places, particularly at Sunderland and South Hadley."

In 1740, Northampton was again blessed by a special visitation of the Spirit. And now the work had extended to most of the towns in the valley of the Connecticut, and through the eastern part of the State to Boston, where, Mr. Prince says, "rising of sixty bills" [requests for prayer] were sometimes put up at once in public by the awakened; the pastor of the Old South Church was visited by six hundred inquirers in six months' time, and the pastor of the New North by more than a thousand; and there, as

in Northampton and everywhere else, a thorough reformation was wrought in the morals of the people, and a complete transformation in their whole deportment. It was estimated that, in all the colonies, there were not less than fifty thousand converts out of a population of two millions. This would be equivalent to eight hundred and seventy-five thousand converts for our present population.

Almost simultaneously with this Great Awakening in America, a work of like characteristics and similar, though not perhaps, equal power, overspread England, Scotland, and Ireland, in connection with the labors of Whitefield and the Wesleys. As in the revivals of the previous century, the Spirit of the Lord lifted up a standard against persecution and violent opposition, so in these he rescued the churches from the invasion of the Arian and Socinian heresies, and the inroads of a dead orthodoxy and a formal Christianity; and they have never since sunk back into so low and cold, so barren and corrupt a state as was universally deplored by American and British divines, by members of the established and the dissenting churches at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Not only all the activity and energy that exist in the Methodist organization, and which are almost clear gain to evangelical religion, but very much of the life and power that have been cherished and perpetuated in the other denominations, were the fruit of this great revival.

But in the latter part of the century, the wars of the American and French Revolution engrossed public attention, and corrupted the public morals, French infidelity spread like a pestilence in Europe and America, and there was a general and lamentable decline in religion. And, as if for the very purpose of marking the nineteenth century as the era of Revivals, and of the conflict between the spirit of skepticism and the Spirit of God or vital Christianity, this century was ushered in with numerous and powerful revivals of religion; and revivals have been more frequent and widely diffused, have succeeded each other at briefer intervals, and have been more generally recognized as a power and a part of the fixed course of events in this than in any former century. Beginning in New England, like those in the days of Edwards, these revivals spread rapidly over the Middle and Southern States, and prevailed with great power in those Western States and territories which were without an inhabitant in the previous century. There was now no Edwards or Whitefield shining with such transcendent brightness as to eclipse lesser lights. But there was Hallock, and Mills, and Dwight, and Griffin, and Porter, and Baldwin, and Mason, and Alexander, and a whole galaxy of scarcely inferior names, who turned many to righteousness and who will shine as the stars forever and ever.

Now for the first time we begin to hear of revivals of religion in colleges. Indeed, previous to this, it seems to have been taken for granted that children and youth, generally, especially young men, must grow up without conversion and without personal religion. The revival in Yale College in 1802, under the powerful preaching and personal influence of President Dwight, brought fifty-eight into the college church, and not a few into churches at their homes, wrought a thorough reformation in the morals of the institution, and put to shame the infidelity which had been

rampant among the students, so that it has never since dared to lift its head. In 1806, there was a revival in Williams College, in which some of the earliest American missionaries were converted, and others received a fresh baptism of the Spirit. "All our first foreign missionaries, Hall, Newell, Mills, Judson, Nott, Rice, Bingham, King, Brewster, and others who entered the field a little later, were converted and received their missionary baptism in these revivals,"* and the American Board and all those sister societies that followed in the train, were their offspring.

The period of thirty years between 1814 and 1845 is often spoken of, and perhaps not without sufficient reason, as distinguished above any other part even of this favored century, and beyond perhaps any other period of equal length in modern times, for the frequency, purity and power of its revivals, occurring every few years in the same church, so that one revival almost met another, and extending from church to church so that the sacred flame was somewhere continually burning. And of the years in these distinguished decades, 1821 and 1831 were perhaps, beyond all others, emphatically years of the right hand of the Most High, both in our churches and in our institutions of learning. We cannot pass from this period without grateful mention of the name of Nettleton, whose personal labors were blessed in scores of revivals and many hundreds of conversions, and whose measures, especially the Inquiry Meeting, have been almost universally adopted among the most approved and effectual means of leading souls to Christ.

From 1845 to 1858, there was a general declension in the churches, owing partly to the great prosperity of the country, and the consequent spirit of speculation and worldliness, but partly also, we think, to unwise measures, and perhaps more unhappy disputes about measures and men as the instruments for promoting revivals. And as if the providence and the Spirit of God intended expressly to rebuke and remove both these causes, in 1857 a time of general calamity and depression in business ensued, followed in 1858 by an almost universal anxiety and interest in personal religion, which sprung up so unexpectedly, so simultaneously, so independently of ordinary or extraordinary men and measures as almost to set them aside, and constrain men everywhere to look directly to God for his blessing.

The awakening began apparently with the most degraded and hopeless population of our large cities, and spread with great rapidity from city to city and State to State, till it moved almost the whole population. The hopeful converts in a single year have been estimated as high as half a million. The prayer meeting—the daily prayer meeting held every morning or every noon, and drawing men aside from their business—the Union prayer meeting, in which Christians of all denominations united—the great prayer meeting, crowding churches, appropriating theatres, and overflowing by hundreds and thousands the largest places of assembly, were among the most striking manifestations of this religious interest in the large cities; and prayer meetings were everywhere among the most power-

* Humphrey on Revivals.

ful means of promoting and extending it. The daily prayer-meeting was sustained in some of the principal cities for years, and attended by business men from every part of the country, and answers to prayer, near at hand and far away, have been recorded, so unequivocal as to convince the skeptical, and numerous enough to fill volumes. And what is still more remarkable, the same year and the same month of the year with this great revival in America, a revival of the same kind, marked by the same characteristic features, sprung up in the north of Ireland, spread with similar rapidity over a large part of Scotland, England, and Wales, and even extended into France and Germany. There were ten thousand hopeful converts in Belfast, a city of one hundred and thirty thousand inhabitants. In Londonderry, it was computed that one-fifth of the church-going population were converted. Personal religion became the one subject of all-engrossing interest. The prayer-meeting was crowded by day and by night with those who had been wont to frequent theatres, dramshops and saloons. In the language of one of the pastors, "the revival has embraced those hitherto beyond the pale of the church; drunkards have been reformed, prostitutes reclaimed, thieves have become honest, Sabbath-breakers, profane swearers, scoffers, neglecters of ordinances, and worthless characters of all descriptions, have been awakened or converted."

The year 1866 has been a year of revivals in very many of the churches, and not a few of the colleges of our country. The revivals in the churches began in many instances with the week of prayer, as those in the colleges have been closely connected this year as in former years with the annual Concert of Prayer for such institutions. And the work has been generally characterized by nothing so much as the simultaneous and almost spontaneous readiness with which great numbers have come out from the world, and consecrated themselves openly, boldly and joyfully to the Lord's service—thus approaching, I cannot but think, (though some have perhaps looked with doubt and suspicion on such rapid and easy conversions,) thus approaching more nearly than has been common in most modern revivals, to the manner in which great multitudes were converted, sometimes by a single sermon, under the preaching of the Apostles, and gathered at once into the churches in the Apostolic age.

This historical outline, brief and imperfect as it is, has occupied so much time that we can do little more than announce some of the conclusions which it involves, and a few of the fundamental principles of the subject.

In the first place, we cannot but think that it fully sustains the proposition which was laid down at the beginning, that true religion has progressed in the world only by a succession of revivals of religion, so that the law of religious progress may be said to be essentially the law of revivals of religion.*

* To prevent misapprehension, it may be expedient, though I trust, not necessary, to add, that when I speak of the *law* of *revivals* as the law of religious *progress*, I mean seasons of more remarkable interest and power, especially in the conversion of sinners, not necessarily followed by periods of *declension*, but succeeded, in accordance with the analogies of nature, and the laws of the human mind, and the history of the Apostolic churches, by intervening seasons of calmer enjoyment, in communion with God, and greater activity in the instruction and edification of the church.

And this conclusion will hardly surprise any one who considers that a similar law—a law *analogous* to this—is quite universal in the natural and providential government of the world, and is, in fact, founded in the nature of man and the nature of things. Alternate seasons of change and rest, of growth and maturity, of progress and conservation, mark the history of nations and races, the whole history of man, as they pervade also the entire constitution and course of nature. This is the *law* of growth in nature, and of progress in society and civilization. Says Froude, in the commencement of his History of England, "It has been with the race of men, as it has been with the planet which they inhabit. As we look back over history, we see times of change and progress, alternating with other times, when life and thought have settled into permanent forms." And he proceeds to show how this has been illustrated in the history of Greece, Rome and the modern European nations, as a preliminary to the illustration of the same principle as it is demonstrated in his History of England. Skeptics and unbelievers, therefore, who scoff at revivals, assail a universal law of nature and of God. And Christians, so called, who oppose revivals, set themselves not only against the plan of God as it is revealed in the Scriptures, and in the history of the church, but against the very law of growth and progress which God has inwrought into the course of nature and the constitution of society.

In the second place, the history of revivals unites with the testimony of the Scriptures, in demonstrating that they are the work of God. The simple fact of their occurrence, in all the successive dispensations, epochs and ages of the church, in such striking analogy, too, to the constitution of nature, in harmony with the general course of events, and as the very law of the growth of the church and the progress of true religion—this simple fact would suffice to prove, that they form part of God's plan and purpose, and are effected by his agency. But we have defined a revival of religion as the effect of a *supernatural* divine influence. The Scriptures explain the wonderful phenomena of the day of Pentecost, and the series of similar scenes recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, as the result of a direct and special outpouring of the Spirit of God. "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, (saith God,) *I will pour out of my Spirit* upon all flesh." Such is the Apostle Peter's explanation of this strange event. It was received as the only adequate explanation by thousands on the day of Pentecost, and by hundreds of thousands and millions, from year to year, wherever the same power was manifested with the same effects, till thus the new religion spread, in a short time, to all the principal cities of the Roman empire. And the facts which are apparent to the world, in every genuine revival, admit of no other adequate explanation. The visible effects,—not to insist now on the internal and spiritual changes,—the transformation of character, in such cases as the conversion of Paul, and John Newton, and Colonel Gardiner, and others scarcely less remarkable which occur in every age and almost every great revival—the entire reformation of morals and manners, not only in individuals, but through communities and large sections of the country, and in different quarters of the globe, simultaneously,

without any possible connection with each other, and without any adequate natural cause—the nature and magnitude, the large number and extensive diffusion of such radical and permanent changes of character and manner of life, are quite inexplicable by any ordinary physiological laws, by any human wisdom or eloquence, by any thing short of a supernatural divine influence. While they are not contrary to nature, nor independent of natural laws; while they fall in with many of the analogies of history, and the laws of society and the human mind, they so transcend any other effects which are wrought by the mere powers of nature and of man, that reason cannot but consent with revelation in regarding them as the supernatural and special work of God.

Thirdly, the Christian who even approximates to the primitive standard of faith, will not fail to recognize, in revivals of religion, the manifestation and agency of a triune God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The harmonious agency of all the persons of the sacred Trinity is distinctly revealed in the inspired history of the earliest revivals in the Christian church, those recorded in the Acts, and is emphasized as their cause and source. "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the *Father* the promise of the *Holy Ghost, he* hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." This is Peter's philosophy, or history, or better still, philosophy of the history of the first great revival in the primitive church, that which occurred on the day of Pentecost. The outpouring of the Spirit is the explanation of the revival, with all its wonderful phenomena and all its blessed fruits. But the outpouring of the Spirit is explained only by the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of the Son of God; and the Father, who so loved the world that he gave his Son for its redemption, gives his Spirit only through the Son exalted at his right hand. The Father is the original giver, the Son is the medium through whom it is given, and the Spirit is the gift of salvation and eternal life to dying men. In other words, the Father is the fountain-head, the Son is the reservoir or channel of communication, and the Holy Spirit is the influence, or agency, that regenerates, sanctifies and saves the soul. This philosophy of divine influence was impersonated in the Trinity, and manifested, as the Trinity was manifested, almost to the senses of the first disciples. The Lord had promised, that he would send them the Holy Spirit from the Father; he dwelt on the promise with great emphasis at the table of the last supper, and charged them, just before his ascension, not to leave Jerusalem, or enter upon the work of promulgating the Gospel, till they were clothed with power by the promised descent of the Spirit. Immediately after receiving this charge, they saw with their own eyes their Lord taken up into heaven, to sit at the right hand of the Father. And when, on the day of Pentecost, a few days later, they saw the heavens opened and the Spirit coming down like a rushing mighty wind, they could almost see, with the bodily sight, that same Lord sitting at the right hand of divine power and majesty, and shedding forth, in audible and visible forms, this heavenly influence upon the church, and through them upon the world. We should study the Acts of the Apostles, and drink in the Spirit

which is at once its main subject and its inspiration, till we can reproduce in our own minds the lively faith of Apostles, and see, almost with the distinctness of ocular vision, the same crucified but now risen and exalted Redeemer, sitting at the right hand of the Father, in full possession of the promised Spirit, and waiting to pour it out in more and more copious effusions upon his believing people, as the divine plan draws nearer and nearer to its accomplishment. And then, having received the same power through the same channel and from the same source, we may go forth with something of the courage and strength and success of Apostles and primitive Christians, to the work of the world's conversion.

Fourthly, the Holy Spirit is ordinarily communicated first to the church, and then through the church to the world. The proper *revival* is in the church, and the conversion of sinners is the consequence of the revival. This is the revealed and divinely appointed order. In a sense, it is also the natural order. Life is *re-vived* in believers, and then it is imparted through them to unbelievers—through the living to the dead. Christians are members of the body of Christ. The same Spirit that dwells without measure in him, dwells in different measures in them. And if he is the medium, they are the means whereby that Spirit is communicated to the unbelieving world. If he is the body, that is full of truth and grace and eternal life, they are the feet and hands that bear and distribute the truth and grace and life to dying men. If he is the heart of divine life and love, they are the tongues of fire that utter it and the lips that breathe it out on those who are perishing in sin. If he is the reservoir of the Spirit, they are the pipes and conductors that convey it to individuals, communities and nations. If he is the great channel of the water of life, reaching all the way from heaven down to earth, they are the little earthly canals and ducts, by which it is to be carried to every tree and flower that is planted in the garden of the Lord, and thus extended till this desert world becomes the paradise of God.

This is the actual order, as it has been usually realized in the history of revivals—those recorded in the Scriptures and those that have been experienced in modern times. It is surprising how little is said in the Bible of the direct and immediate influence of the Spirit on unbelievers—brief, casual, incidental notices only, despatching the subject in a few scattered verses, and these, for the most part, implying the doctrine rather than directly inculcating it. But the Saviour dwells on the mission and work of the Spirit to the church and in the hearts of his disciples, through chapter after chapter, and recurs to it again and again as if it were a doctrine of the utmost interest and importance. And when we pass on to read the history of the Spirit's work in the Acts, and the fruits of it in the Epistles, it is his miraculous power in the Apostles, his sanctifying influence in the church, and his supernatural gifts and special graces to individual Christians—in short, it is his work upon and in believers, and this alone, on which the sacred writers dwell. It is the outpouring of the Spirit on the little band of praying disciples, explained and enforced by the preaching of Peter, that is followed by the conversion of three thousand souls on the day of Pentecost. And it was the gifts and graces, the faith and hope, the love

and joy, the charity and good works of believers, that are narrated as the immediate antecedents of the daily additions that were afterwards made to the church. Such, too, has been the history of revivals in modern times. The drooping graces of the church have first been revived, and then the new life has extended and pervaded the community. Christians have been quickened to new prayerfulness and personal efforts, and then sinners have been converted. There have been apparent exceptions. But these exceptions, when carefully examined, are usually found to prove the rule. I have been surprised to discover so much evidence that the great revival in 1858, which seemed to spring up so suddenly among the degraded and polluted, was preceded, in this country and in Great Britain, by so much earnest, importunate and believing prayer. And rapid and spontaneous as the recent ingatherings have seemed to be, a felt want, a longing and looking, with more or less of working and living, for better things, manifestly prepared the way for the revivals of 1866, and in very many of the churches the outpouring of the Spirit was immediately consequent upon the observance of the week of prayer.

Fifthly, the means by which Christians are to obtain new and richer communications of the Spirit, for themselves and others, is prayer—the prayer of faith—the prayer of faith to the Father, through the mediation and atonement of the Son, for the reviving and renewing influences of the Spirit. While such prayer—the prayer of faith through the intercession of Christ—is the divinely appointed means or condition of receiving every good gift, it is revealed with remarkable clearness and emphasis as the divine economy of revivals and special outpourings of the Spirit. This is strikingly illustrated in the history of the first revival in the Christian church, and the facts are doubtless recorded for this purpose, that they might serve as an example to the church in all ages. The Apostles were directed to tarry at Jerusalem till they were invested with power for their arduous work, by the bestowment of the promised Spirit. Conscious of their utter impotence in themselves for such a work, they waited in united, persevering and believing prayer, till the promise was fulfilled and the blessing was bestowed with a fullness and richness that surpassed even their own expectations. That was a model prayer-meeting! They were *all* there, the whole church—would that the same were true of modern churches!—"with the *women*,"—that might be taken for granted in a modern prayer-meeting; would that as much could be said for the men! They were *all* there, with one accord, to pray for this one thing,—the gift of the promised Spirit. They continued, or as it is in the original, they *persevered* and *persisted*, with one accord, in prayer and supplication, hour after hour and day after day, for ten days, till the day of Pentecost was fully come; and then they were all filled with the Holy Ghost; and then, as the result of this manifestation and the preaching of Peter, the same day, there were added unto them about three thousand souls. It is to be feared there are few such prayer-meetings in modern times. But wherever there is any considerable approximation to this model, similar results have followed. Rarely, if ever, have there been great accessions of genuine converts to the church, without some approach, at least, to this scriptural

example—without much earnest, persistent, believing prayer, at least in some small praying circle, from some few pious hearts, for the outpouring of the Spirit, as an imperative necessity to the power of the church and the very life of true religion. And wherever and whenever the church is not revived and sinners are not converted, the apostolic reason for it is: 'Ye receive not, because ye ask not. Or if ye ask and receive not, it is because ye ask amiss.'

Sixthly, the divinely appointed way in which the convincing and converting power of the Holy Spirit is to reach the unbelieving world, is through the united *testimony* of the church and the Spirit, or, which is the same thing in other words, it is the Holy Spirit dwelling in the hearts, speaking from the lips, and living in the lives of sincere Christians. If there is any truth which is clearly taught in the Scriptures and in the history of revivals, and which has been impressed upon me by my own observation and experience, it is that the Spirit is not limited to any one set of *measures*. But this is a general *principle* which lies back of all questions touching measures. This divine economy is stated with great distinctness by Peter and the other Apostles, in the Acts: "Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are his *witnesses* of these things, and so is *also* the *Holy Ghost*, whom God hath given to *them that obey him*." This idea of the disciples of Christ being his witnesses, is repeated again and again in the Acts and made prominent also in the writings of the Apostles. And it is not the immediate followers of Christ only, who saw with their own eyes the great facts of his life, that are declared to be witnesses. Paul was chosen to be a witness of the manifestation of Christ to him in his *own conversion*, and of the revelations which were afterwards made, through the *Spirit*, to his consciousness and *inward* experience. And it was expected that all obedient souls would be ready to testify to the truth and power of the Gospel, as they had experienced it in their own hearts. Christianity is a fact, a revelation of God, embodied first of all in the life and death, resurrection and ascension of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and attested by those who were eye-witnesses of these things, but designed to be perpetually repeated in the experience and re-incarnated in the lives of all who are *in* Christ Jesus, and who are therefore qualified and expected to bear perpetual testimony to these facts, as they are revealed to their own souls by his Spirit, whom he hath given unto them. Living Christianity, is Christ risen and reigning in the hearts, enthroned and glorified on the lips and in the lives of his believing people. And *we* are his witnesses of *these things*, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him. This united and consistent testimony of the people of God and the Spirit of God, is one which, according to the promise of our Lord, men cannot easily gainsay or resist. When the Spirit *and* the bride say, Come, as they did in the primitive church, and as, according to the Revelation, they will most emphatically say in the last and best days of the church, then men will come to Christ. This testimony must be uttered, first by ministers in the preaching of the Gospel, whose preaching will be in demonstration of the Spirit and with

power, only when they preach from their own experience a living Christianity, a living Christ, risen and reigning in their own inmost souls, enthroned and glorified in their own daily lives, even as Paul testified: "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Nor should it be forgotten that there is a direct, pointed, earnest, and sympathetic *way* of preaching the vital truths of the Gospel, which makes some men far more successful in promoting revivals and conversions than other men of perhaps equal piety, even as Paul was more emphatically what we might perhaps call a "revival preacher," than any of the other Apostles; and this manner of preaching the truth can hardly be too assiduously cultivated by all ministers of the Gospel who would be wise, as all ministers should be, to win souls. Then this living Gospel of Christ must be preached over again on the Sabbath, and every day of the week, in public and in private, in the sacred assembly and in all the secular walks of life, by the lips and lives of lay Christians. The testimony of older Christians and of young converts in the prayer-meeting, is one of the most appropriate and one of the most powerful instrumentalities for promoting revivals of religion. Perhaps their private testimonies and personal appeals to neighbors and friends, are a still more sacred duty and a still more irresistible power. It must, however, be the testimony, not only of the lips, but also of the life, else nobody will believe it. And it should be accompanied with prayer for the gift of the Holy Spirit, not only to dwell in their hearts and speak from their lips, but to speak through them and with them to others with a power that shall turn *their* hearts and wills, as the rivers of water are turned. The testimony without the prayer, will be idle words, and the prayer without the testimony is solemn mockery. Both, it is feared, are sadly wanting in our churches. Where is the church of which it can be said, after the prayer-meeting, or even after the solemn assembly on the Lord's day, "they were all with one accord in one place." Where is the church whose members are all, or even a majority of them, ready to rise up in the religious meeting and stand up in the market place, and say: "We are witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given unto us." Let the prayer accompany the testimony, and the testimony accompany the prayer, and ingatherings into the church are as certain to follow, as plowing and sowing in seed-time, are sure to be followed by the harvest.

If we would see revivals of religion in even more than their primitive frequency and purity and power, as we are authorized to expect them in these latter days, two great, closely connected and mutually correlative truths, or rather perhaps two different poles of one and the same great truth, must be held *together*, held in just proportion and harmony, held not only in the creed, but consciously in the hearts, and practically in the lives of ministers and Christians. In the first place, we must reverence the person and magnify the office and work of the Holy Spirit. We do not honor, as we should, this divine person, the last outgoing and fullest manifestation of the Deity. We do not give this heavenly agent, the chief and immediate executive officer, if I may so speak, of the kingdom of God, the place which he holds in the Scriptures, and in the hearts of the early

Christians. Ministers do not preach often enough, and Christians do not read and reflect as much as they should, on the person and mission of the Holy Ghost. If we would take up the passages of Scripture which speak of the office and work of the Holy Spirit—take them up one by one in their order, and weigh their import and catch their spirit, from that in Genesis, in which this divine influence is faintly shadowed forth as the Spirit of God moving upon the face of the waters, to that in the Revelation, where the Spirit and the bride, with united and emphatic voice say, Come; if we would trace his operations in the inspiration of patriarchs and prophets, and in the revival of religion and the reformation of the people from age to age under the old dispensation, and then on the eve of the opening of the new, find it intimated, as in the Gospel of John, that *that* should be so much more emphatically the dispensation of the Spirit, that, comparatively speaking, it might be said, "the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified;" could we listen to the teachings of our Lord, as at one time he promises all good things to those who ask them of him, and at another promises the Holy Spirit in the same connection, as the synonym or rather the sum and substance of all those good things; and as, on still another occasion, he stands amid the assembled multitude, on the last great day of the feast, and offers the Holy Spirit to all who thirst, as an inexhaustible fountain of living waters;—could we especially hear him discourse to his disciples, in his last conversation with them, of the heavenly Comforter, whom he would send to them, to convince the world of sin and to guide *them* in all right ways, to be their teacher and sanctifier, to be words on their lips and wisdom in their minds and strength and courage and joy in their hearts; in a word, to be to them all, and more than all, that *he* was, insomuch that it would be greatly to their advantage that he should go away, and send the Comforter unto them,—then could we see all those magnificent promises fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, and in all the history of the primitive church, as it is contained in the Acts, which was well entitled, by some of the early Christian Fathers, 'the Gospel of the Holy Ghost,' since it narrates the mission and work of the Holy Ghost, as the Gospels, commonly so called, narrate the mission and work of Jesus Christ,—could we drink in the impassioned words and more impassioned thoughts and feelings of Paul and John and all the writers of the Epistles, as they speak of the regenerating and sanctifying, the enlightening and life-giving, the guiding and comforting, the adopting and witnessing, the teaching and anointing and sealing presence and power of the Holy Spirit, whereby we know all things and which is to us the pledge and earnest of our heavenly inheritance, the very beginning of heaven on earthly ground,—could we be suitably impressed also with the awful significance of those warnings of our Lord and his Apostles, against grieving this benevolent agent, against quenching the sacred flame, against blaspheming the Holy Ghost and committing that sin which is unto death, which has no forgiveness and for which we may not even pray,—and if we would furthermore enforce all these scriptural impressions by a clear perception of the immense contrast between the bright and the dark period, in the history of the church, and the experience of the individual Christians

caused severally by the presence or the absence of the Holy Spirit—*then* should we see and feel that without the Spirit of God the Christian were indeed left comfortless, nay, (for such is the meaning of the original,) fatherless and friendless, impotent not only to benefit others, but even to save himself; the church would be salt without savor, a candlestick without a candle, a body without a soul; and the world a perpetual chaos, without beauty or life, infinitely more dark and dismal and empty and desolate than that over which the Spirit of God brooded when he first moved upon the waters.

But this is only a part of the truth—perhaps not the part which most pertains to our duty, and therefore not the part of which we most need to be reminded; and it will be a barren flower, unless it is rendered fruitful by proper union with its counterpart. It is only one pole of the truth, and there will be no development of light and heat, no manifestation of divine life and power, till it is brought into close connection with the other pole. And though this may be said to be the positive pole, since it is the divine side of the truth, the other is none the less indispensable, because it is the negative pole, and all the more practical and vital, since it is the human side of the truth, and so that which involves our own immediate agency and responsibility. The very idea of the Holy Spirit, as it is revealed in the Scriptures, is not that of God over us, nor even God with us, but GOD IN US—God in the church, filling it with his presence, and manifesting himself in and through it, even as he manifested himself to Israel, in and through the tabernacle and the temple—God inhabiting the consecrated bodies and souls of his peculiar people, as he inhabited the praises of Israel, and through them revealing his truth to the world, and showing forth his power and glory to the nations—the Spirit of God indwelling in kindred human spirits, interpenetrating and informing them, communing with them, witnessing to them, and testifying through them, living in their lives, speaking through their lips, and acting through their organs; in short, so pervading them with his presence, that it is not they who live and speak and act, but his Spirit living and speaking and acting through them. And the counterpart idea to this is, that the church is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and individual Christians are his body, and their members are his organs, their faculties his channels of communication and influence. If, therefore, the church without the Spirit were a temple without a God, the Spirit without the church were a God without a temple for the manifestation of his presence. If the church without the Spirit would be a candlestick without a candle, the Spirit without the church would be a candle without a candlestick to hold it up and let its light shine before the world. If the Christian without the Spirit would be a body without a soul, the Spirit without the living Christian would be a soul without a body, truth and love without speech and action, life without the proper organs of communication and outward expression, a fountain of life without any proper channel through which it can pour forth its healing waters. And great as is the dearth of divine influence in the church and the world, the real deficiency is not in the original source of supply, but in the channel for its communication. We are not straitened in God, but in our-

selves. The fountain is infinite and inexhaustible, but the channel is short and narrow. The fountain is open, but the channel is obstructed, sometimes quite choked at the entrance. Since the coming of Christ, the heavens are opened, and the Spirit is poured out like water, yet Christians do not drink their fill—it is diffused like the vital air, yet Christians do not breathe it in till they are full of this heavenly influence. When Christians are filled with the Spirit,—such is the divine economy, such too the very nature and fitness of things,—then, and not till then, will that Spirit overflow and flow out over the unbelieving world. The exhortation, then, which chiefly concerns us is: "Be not drunken with wine," be not intoxicated with the pleasures or the treasures of the world, "but BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT."

ESSAY.

BY REV. WILLIAM W. WOODWORTH, OF BELCHERTOWN.

LIVING HOUSEHOLD PIETY ESSENTIAL TO THE HIGHEST SPIRITUAL POWER AND PROSPERITY OF THE CHURCH.

IT is only a few days since I was informed that the brother, who was first requested to perform this part of your services, and who would have done the work which I now attempt far better than I can hope to do, felt it to be his duty to decline the service. For your sake I regret his decision. It only remains for me to do the best I can to fill his place.

The subject for this evening's discussion is this: "*Living household piety essential to the highest spiritual power and prosperity of the church.*"

Let us try, in the outset, to bring before us the ideal of a Christian household, such as I suppose was in the thought of the committee, when they used the expression, "Living Household Piety;" such as was perhaps in the thought of God, when he willed the family as one of the great means of human happiness and human holiness.

The origin of a Christian household is in the conjugal love of two believers in Jesus, whose hearts are filled with his Holy Spirit, and whose strongest desire is to do, and to be, and to help each other do and be all that God wishes them to do and be. From the first, they are mutual helpers in all goodness; and by the constant and silent action and reaction of holiness and of love, they draw each other daily nearer to God. In process of time, there come other beings, weak and dependent, into this temple of love; and on their entrance, they are consecrated to God by parental piety. They come to have their characters moulded for all the future by the plastic hand of the parent, and by the loving power of divine grace. The mother is the first to take possession

of those young hearts in the name of Jesus. She takes them up into her affections that she may take them up into his. With the everflowing radiance of her love, she reflects on them the beauty and the glory of his. The father stands in this household as the image and the representative of God—of God's calmness and patience and justice and love, guarding its purity, counseling, instructing, warning, chastening in love, whenever the occasion calls for it; and shedding over the whole the influence of his own living piety. Each addition to this family is regarded, not as a new burden to be borne, but as a new trust which God has lovingly committed to these parents, a new source of joy, filling them with new gratitude to God, and opening in them new fountains of love. Each child is also a new motive to holiness, leading to a new sense of responsibility, and to new supplications for grace. In a sense very different from that of the poet, "Heaven lies about" that little one "in its infancy"—the Heaven created by sanctified love.

In our ideal family, each child, as it came upon the sphere of action, would of course show that it had, like all the rest of the race, a depraved nature, that it had inherited evil inclinations, a bias to wrong, through a long line of ancestry, from our first parents; but each child also, thus met by the love, the faith and the prayers of the parents, might be expected, in accordance with the covenant and promises of God, to be early sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and to grow up into Christ in all things. Brothers and sisters, with all their varieties of character and temperament, here become helpers of each other's joy and purity and grace. The law of the house is not fear, not selfishness, but love, subduing all bad tempers, first in the parents, then in the children; and preventing all out-breaks of passion, and all selfish aims. Parental authority is firm, but informed throughout with love. It is *felt*, felt every where and always, felt if need be in wholesome severity; but nowhere felt as unjust infliction, or passionate excitement, or galling restraint. Visibly to the eye of the children, the strongest desire of the parents is, not for worldly distinction or wealth, but for the highest attainments in holiness, and the highest usefulness of each member of the family. Plainly, what they plan for, pray for, labor for most of all, is nothing earthly; nor is it *merely* the final salvation of their children; it is their early and complete consecration to God, and their daily baptism with his Spirit. This is the very atmosphere which pervades the house, and which every member of the family must breathe; pervades it always, in the hours of amusement and study and business, not less than in the hours of worship, and not less in the intervals between revivals of religion, than in those seasons of mercy. Yet, there is no gloom here, no stiffness, no pharisaic rigidity, but a loving, joyous consecration of all to Christ, the glorious liberty of the sons of God. God's blessed Spirit dwells there. The house is a temple of the Holy Ghost. He has come to them, and makes his "abode with them;" and "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

Such, roughly sketched, is our ideal of a Christian household—such in its perfection would be "living household piety." Let us now see what

elements of Christian character the influence of such a household, by its necessary laws and conditions, is fitted especially to cherish.

1. *Dependence on God.* The whole structure of the family, as God ordained it, is adapted to work into the very souls, to mingle with the very life-blood of the household, the lesson of dependence. A necessary law of the household is the law of mutual dependence. The law binds the family together by golden threads; cut those threads, and you have no longer a *family;* but a collection of isolated individuals, pursuing their separate interests, and desecrating the sacred names of parents, and husband and wife, child, brother and sister. But especially are the children in their earliest years, wholly dependent on their parents for support, for instruction, for every thing. They feel this dependence, and freely and joyfully recognize it. As years pass on, this sense of dependence diminishes, but the tendency of the living piety of the parents, of their united prayers and praises, of their instructions, of the whole spirit of the household, is to lead the children to transfer the feeling to God, their Heavenly Parent. From the first, they have seen their parents, on whom *their* dependence seemed so absolute, acknowledge that all the blessings of the household came from God. This acknowledgment, daily made, made each morning and evening at the family worship, made at every meal, made on all fitting occasions, was felt to be, not hypocritical and formal, but the genuine language of the parent's heart. A youth could scarcely go out from such a family without having thoroughly learned this first lesson of piety, the lesson of dependence on God.

2. *Faith in God.* Another necessary law of the family is the law of mutual faith. Our first and perhaps our truest conceptions of faith arise from the confidence which, long before we understand the word faith, we learn to repose in our parents. It is sad when this beautiful faith of childhood receives a shock in the seen and felt unworthiness of the parent. In that fearful moment, the doom of the child's soul may be sealed. It takes now its start, in the way of unbelief, and doubt, and skepticism, towards perdition. But in the household which I have supposed, the faith of the child in the parent is never lost. But by and by, the child begins to perceive, not that his parents are unworthy of trust, but that he has certain wants which they cannot meet. He feels very soon the limits of his own power; it takes him a little, only a little, longer to perceive that their power has limits also. They cannot always relieve his pains, nor heal his sicknesses; and especially they cannot effectually minister to those deeper necessities of his soul, which the awful consciousness of guilt, and the felt power of sinful propensity bring to light. It is now their part to lead his faith up to God, who can supply these wants; and they are ready for the work. Indeed, by all the influences of the household, by their own quiet resting in God, by their words of faith in the Redeemer, expressed daily in prayer and in song, they have already begun the work. That faith in them, which was so early awakened, and now trusts without misgiving to their word, becomes the ladder by which through grace, the needy soul climbs up to the higher faith, which makes him one with Jesus, and links him to all the resources of infinite power and mercy.

And it is unspeakably desirable to have this faith, thus linking the soul to Jesus, before that trying moment comes, which comes sooner or later to most earnest souls, when the difficulties of religion throng around them, and they seem to feel all their old foundations giving way beneath them. No more terrible moment ever comes to a human soul than that. He has lost his anchorage, and seems drifting, he knows not whither, on the infinite ocean of doubt. What shall hold him now? Nothing can do it better than his early faith, if it became a living reality. Is it then a blind faith, resting only on a parent's word? No. So far as it was that, so far as it was merely traditional, it has gone now, swept away in the first gust of the storm which has broke upon him. But it had long since passed up into a faith which brought him into conscious relations with Jesus, and into conscious fellowship with his power and grace. *This* no storm can sweep away. He knows what Jesus is—knows it by the deepest experiences of his soul.

3. *Love for God.* A family, all looking up with reverential, joyful love to their earthly parents, is a beautiful miniature of God's holy family looking up to Him with supreme affection. It is natural for a child to love a loving earthly parent. But, you may say, it is not natural for him to love God. In one sense, most deep and most sad, this is true. It is true, most painfully true, that the human heart is by nature alienated from God. But, in a sense not less deep, it is also true that it *is* natural for the soul to love God. That soul was made for God; made to love God as truly as to love an earthly parent; made with a sense of its relationship to God so ineradicable that it can never be entirely destroyed; made so that it cannot attain its highest blessedness without loving God; and so that in all its alienation, it will sadly feel its orphanage and be blindly groping after its lost parent. It is also true, that the love for the parent, which springs up spontaneously in the child's mind in response to the love which the parent lavishes on him, is the fittest image of that supreme love which he owes to God. It is true, too, that nothing is better adapted to show him his sin in not loving God, than the fact that he *does* so love an earthly father, who, good as he is, is so much less good than God. Parents who have a living piety, will not fail to show him those things; and so by the grace of God his love for them will pass upward into that love for God, which his law requires. All the spirit of the household tends to this. Love for God pervades the parents' hearts. They speak of him, and to him, as to their father. They manifestly love Him with a love, like that with which their children regard them, but intensely deeper and stronger. This love, breathed out from their hearts, and mingling with the vital air of the house, is breathed into the hearts of the children. Here then is the place for love to God to begin, and grow towards its maturity.

4. *Obedience to God.* One of the first lessons of a Christian household, is the lesson of cheerful and unquestioning obedience to parental authority. So far as it fails of that, it comes short of being a *Christian* household. In such a household, such obedience is conscientiously and lovingly enforced, and the habit of obeying is early formed, so early that no child will in after life remember when it did not seem to belong to his nature.

Now, under the power of grace, this habit of obedience to an earthly parent easily rises to submission to God. All the influences of the household impress this lesson, that infinitely above all is obedience due to God. Indeed, in the very process of instruction and of discipline, in which obedience to the earthly parent is secured, the higher duty of obedience to God is often learned also. The child submissively and lovingly bows his will at once to both fathers, the earthly and the Heavenly. This at least is true, that the child trained in such a family, when he becomes a child of God, is apt to be the most reliable and most stable of Christians. The unquestioning obedience which was the habit of the family, becomes also the habit of the Christian life.

5. *Unselfish love for man.* In the Christian household, each is to live, not for self, but for the good of all. The family bond is not self-interest, but love, purified and strengthened by mingling with it the spiritual affection. All are here taught to love each other as themselves. Each will bends gracefully to the will of others. Each is taught to sacrifice his own interests and pleasure to the welfare of the rest; and to do this, not from the low motives of expediency, but from the higher motives of the Gospel. Thus the Christian family teaches God's great law of love:—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,"—teaches it as it can no where else be taught, and interweaves with the most enduring habits of the soul, this habit of unselfish love. But the lesson is not learned for the family *only*, as if the love which circulated there were to be changed to indifference or to hate when it passed the household limits. In that family, the question, "Who is my neighbor?" receives its true answer, and all the prayers and the influences of the family impress this truth, that there is *one family of man*, of which God is the Father, and Jesus the Saviour, and *all the members brothers*.

Such then is living, household piety, and such the elements of Christian character, which it is fitted to work into the deepest life of each member of the family; and that not by instruction and counsels simply, not mainly by giving "line upon line and precept upon precept," but by *the necessary laws and conditions of the family life*, as God ordained it, and as every Christian parent should try to realize it. Now, these are the very elements which are most essential to the spiritual power and prosperity of the church. That power and prosperity depend far less on what the church does, than on what the church is. If she is what she should be, she will do what she should do, and do it far more effectively than if there were all the doing, without the holy character behind it. Dependence on God, faith in God, love for God, unquestioning obedience to God, unselfish love for man; the church in which these live and flourish, will always have power. But we cannot hope that these qualities will any where else be so efficiently wrought into the character as in the Christian household.

1. No where else can they be so *early* developed. The influences of the family are the first which meet the child. They are the most constant and the most potent. Sunday schools! We thank God for them. We recognize them as a powerful means of good and a powerful auxiliary of the pulpit and the Christian household. We pray and labor for their pros-

perity. But they do not meet the child so early as the influences of the family. They do not envelope the little one with the atmosphere it breathes. They have one hour of one day in the week, the family has all hours of all days. They are not, what they are sometimes called, the nursery of the church. That distinction belongs to the Christian family. Christian parents should not depend on them to lead their little ones to Jesus. *They* are the persons to do that. They should expect God to be true to his covenant, and he will be if there is no lack in them of faith or faithfulness.

Now, there is wonderful power for the church in the consistent piety of a little child. There are few stronger things in this world. It is "a little child" that shall "lead the lion and the bear, the young lion and the fatling"—all wildest, fiercest, most animal natures. "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained *strength*, because of thine enemies, to still the enemy and the avenger." If all the children of all the members of our churches were to show from the first all the traits of character which a living household piety is fitted to cherish, they would be a mighty army of helpers in the conflict of the church with the world. When conversion is delayed this mighty power is lost; and this is a loss which the church can ill afford.

2. The piety which is nourished in a Christian household is apt to be *of the best quality*. It is rooted deepest; and bears the most and the best fruit. This is so partly because there it begins earliest. Piety is not only a seed which remaineth in the believer, but a growth; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. The warm emotions of the recent convert are not the measure of his holiness. He is born again, but he is yet an infant. He may laugh louder and cry louder than older Christians, but there is a great deal less of him. It makes, then, a great difference in the degree of holiness which a Christian shall attain, whether his piety begins in childhood, or twenty, thirty, or fifty years later. In the one case, it grows with the growth, and strengthens with the strength, and so reaches its maturity before its seed is planted in the other. This is one of the best ways to elevate the piety of the church.

Besides, piety which grows in a Christian home is apt to have a grace, and beauty, and naturalness, and symmetry, which it would lack were these home influences wanted. It enters more completely into the spiritual life; it interweaves itself more intimately with every fibre of the being. Each member of the family helps the growth of every other. Even the parents are brought and kept nearer to Christ, by their constant effort to make theirs a Christian home. When such is the effort and the aim, the children do the parents quite as much good, as the parents the children. That sense of responsibility, which does more than all things else to make us lean on God, is kept alive in the parents' hearts. They are not looking mainly to influences outside of the family for the salvation of their children. They are not waiting for revivals of religion to bring their offspring to Jesus. Revivals of religion! We have felt their mighty power. We long, and labor, and pray for them, as the richest blessings which God can give to his churches. But wise Christian parents will not wait for such seasons of

grace, as if they were the only times when the promise to them and to their children can be fulfilled. A revival of religion, what is it but a manifestation of the Holy Spirit's power and grace? But they expect the presence of the Holy Spirit *always* to be manifested in their home by his sanctifying and quickening power. The Holy Spirit *abides with them forever*. They feel that the responsibility rests on them to create, and to secure from God's Spirit, the influences which shall save their household. It is a salutary feeling. It keeps them watching and praying, careful not to grieve the Spirit, careful always to be filled with the Spirit. The piety thus gained in the family, and for the family, goes out into the church and the world. It beams brightest at home, but it shines every where. They do not go to the meetings of the church to be warmed, if they may, by the warmth of others; but with hearts already warmed from the coals on their own altar to communicate the life which God has imparted to them. They go out into the world, also, showing every where the beauty and the fruitfulness of the piety which grows in the garden of God. It is no strange thing for them to speak for Jesus, they have learned to do it at home; and they can do it any where, if the Master calls for it. Faithful at home, they are faithful every where.

When the younger members of this household go out one by one into the outer world, they go, with characters matured, with happy memories, and Christian habits, ready to form new homes, in which they will raise still higher, if possible, the standard of their early home. So the circle of holy influence widens. New families spring up, full of spiritual life, to bless the church and to act on the world. They go too to be Christian workers, in whatever sphere of activity Christ may place them. They go, with the healthful current of life coursing through every artery of the spiritual system; and widely asunder as they may be separated, they carry with them, as an element of power for Christ and his church, the influence of that living piety, which met them on their entrance into the temple of love, where God gave them their being.

FIRST REPORT

OF THE

STATE COMMITTEE ON HOME EVANGELIZATION.

PRESENTED TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE, SEPTEMBER 13, 1866.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE of the Congregational Churches of this State provided, last year, for a STATE COMMITTEE ON HOME EVANGELIZATION; to consist, first, of the chairmen of committees on the same subject, appointed by Local Conferences; second, of other members, lay or clerical, appointed by these Conferences, one from each; third, of the Recording and Statistical Secretaries of the General Conference, with five other persons, elected by the same; fourth, of a State Secretary of Home Evangelization, chosen by the committee constituted as just described. This committee was to assume the entire financial responsibility and the general direction of the effort; and was, so far, to form a distinct and independent body; relieving the Conference from any necessity of assuming accountabilities and cares for which it was never designed.

The State Committee held its first meeting, in the Old South Chapel, Boston, on the 10th of October, 1865. Twenty members were present. It was organized by the choice of Hon. William B. Washburne, of Greenfield, Chairman, Rev. Reuben T. Robinson, of Winchester, Recording Secretary, Rev. Daniel P. Noyes, of Boston, State Secretary of Home Evangelization, Marshall S. Scudder, Esq., of Boston, Treasurer, and the appointment of an Advisory Committee and a Finance Committee.*

A Committee of conference with the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society was also appointed, consisting of Rev. E. B. Webb, D. D., Rev. R. T. Robinson, Rev. J. W. Wellman, Dea. William Thurston, and M. S. Scudder, Esq. This committee were cordially received by the Executive Committee of the Society, and will lay before the Conference the results of the interview.

A second meeting of the State Committee was held, at Boston, during the Anniversary week, on Tuesday, the 29th of May, last; at which, reports were presented from several of the Local Conferences, and matters

* For a list of Members of the State Committee, during the year, see Appendix to this Report.

of interest and importance received attention. Twenty-one members were present; who unanimously adopted the following

Suggestions to the Committees on Home Evangelization, in the Several Local Conferences.

The Committees on Home Evangelization, in the several Local Conferences, are requested:

1. To use their best endeavors to induce the Conferences to set apart a stated season in at least one of their regular meetings, in each year, to the deliberate and thorough consideration of the *Work of the Churches;* affording opportunity for reports from the churches and a discussion of questions bearing upon *popular Christianization;* ordering these discussions in such a manner as to call public attention to points of pressing moment, and to secure a regular progress from year to year.

2. To secure, as soon as possible, from all the churches, a definition and acceptance of distinct parishes, the formal acknowledgment of responsibility for the same, and the establishment of the *Monthly Home Prayer Meeting* in their behalf.

3. To advocate before the Conferences, as suitable opportunity may offer, the establishment of *Neighborhood Meetings*, to be statedly held for at least a part of every year, to embrace on their rolls as many church members as possible, and to be conducted with a special view to the following objects: (1.) The promotion of that Christian acquaintance and brotherly interest, to which all believers are bound by covenant, and in which alone churches become true households of the Lord: (2.) The affording opportunity for prayer and conversation with inquirers, and loving aid to such as are beginning to walk in the right way: (3.) The cultivation, in church members, of the habit of social, and so of public, prayer; and the calling into exercise of Christian gifts: (4.) The bringing under direct religious influence, such neglecters as can not be persuaded to enter more public assemblies: and (5.) The furnishing to neighborhoods at a distance from the sanctuary, a valuable Christian privilege.

4. To complete, before the middle of next July, lists and descriptions of *Out-districts*—furnishing the items requested in the Circular—and forward the same to the Secretary, for insertion in the Annual Report; being *particularly careful* to record all new movements of churches, in behalf of those hitherto neglectful or neglected, and especially all examples of success in such efforts.

5. The Chairmen of Committees in the Franklin, Pilgrim, Barnstable, Essex South and Essex North Conferences, are requested to make, if possible, complete returns of all the facts and statistics, for which blanks are furnished in the Minutes of the General Conference for this year.

On the evening of the same day, a public meeting was held in the Mount Vernon Church. The meeting was opened with prayer by Rev. H. B. Hooker, D. D.; addresses were made, by the State Secretary, by Rev. Henry C. Trumbull, Rev. E. N. Kirk. D, D., Rev. H. M. Dexter, D. D.,

Rev. A. H. Plumb and Rev. J. W. Harding; and the following Resolutions were adopted.

Resolved,

1. We recognize with gratitude to God the one controlling purpose of our Fathers, to found and perpetuate on these shores a thoroughly Christian people; and we welcome the movement to resume, in its whole length and breadth, this aim, which, next to the glorious Gospel itself, is our best inheritance from the past.

2. Methods ought to be devised, by the churches severally responsible, to reach every "out-district" with stated Christian influences. There should be *no neglected places in Massachusetts.*

3. Whatever expense of labor or of money is necessary for effectively reaching the entire population of the State, is a sacred debt, due to Christ, to the church, to our fellow citizens, and to mankind.

4. We hold ourselves bound in covenant with our Lord, to use our best endeavors to see that the Gospel is carried to every soul in the State, in such form and manner as may reasonably be expected to impart its infinite blessing, where not wilfully and persistently refused; and in the prosecution of this endeavor, no difficulties or obstacles shall be counted of any moment. And furthermore,

5. We individually acknowledge it a sacred obligation to do all that we can, in the several churches with which we are connected, in Conferences of churches, through benevolent Societies and by personal labors for souls, and by continual prayer, to carry into effect the spirit and intent of these Resolves.

The meeting was one of interest, and afforded much encouragement.

The State Secretary has been actively employed during the year, and has been received with gratifying cordiality, in all parts of the Commonwealth. Besides preaching on the Sabbath and spending much time in consultation with ministers and others, he has attended eighteen Conferences of Churches —also upon special invitation, one Conference in a neighboring State—and seven meetings of Ministerial Associations. It would have been possible for him to have attended a larger number of Conferences, were it not that so many are held at the same time—a majority in the single month of October.

Encouraging Results

of the present movement on the part of the churches and people of our communion for a more thorough popular Christianization, are found, (1) in a manifest increase of interest, in this subject, over a large portion of the State, as witnessed in the meetings of Local Conferences and otherwise; (2) in endeavors to provide *county assistants* to ministers and churches, in their prosecution of this work; (3) in numerous efforts of churches for more effectually reaching outlying neighborhoods and neglecting classes; (4) in movements for the erection of chapels in out-districts, and (5) in an increased activity on the part of members of churches.

The particulars of this progress are as yet imperfectly reported in form. Before entering into details, it seems best to await more complete returns.

STATISTICS.

The General Conference of last year recommended "every church to investigate its field, and make report of facts and statistics, in accordance with the blanks furnished for that purpose in the Minutes." As these reports required, in all cases, much care, and in some, a good deal of labor, and as the whole matter, moreover, was new to the great majority of the ministers, it was not anticipated that complete returns would be made; and indeed, we were prepared to be satisfied, this first year, with a very meagre beginning. It would have been a simple, though certainly a laborious task, for the Secretary, by independent investigations, to have brought the statistics to something approaching completeness. But inasmuch as the chief object in asking for these statements and figures was, to engage ministers and churches in such a thorough and methodical examination of their parishes, as would be likely to incite them to more zealous efforts, it was not thought worth while to sacrifice this end, merely for the sake of securing full tables the present year. The returns already rendered, afford a valuable basis of argument and illustration; and exemplify the importance of the undertaking. In another year, we hope that the churches will supply a basis of greater breadth and more accurate finish.

(For the Tables, see Appendix to this Report.)

If inquiry be made respecting the accuracy of these tables, we reply: They *ought* to be reliable; for the facts are returned by persons whose duty it is to be informed in regard to these matters and to communicate information to their brethren. The investigation has been pursued in *the right way*. We believe them to be generally trustworthy. If mistakes are discovered, it will probably be in the column of "population of the parish." And yet this is one of the easiest to fill; since the State census was taken last year, and the returns for every town are accessible to residents of the town, though not yet to the public. Another year will secure greater accuracy, we trust, as well as greater fullness. With but imperfect means of access to the public, it has hitherto been impossible to give desirable explanations, bring important points satisfactorily to view, or engage the attention of the churches as we could have wished.

Importance of Thoughtful and Careful Investigations.

The value of such returns, especially when complete, is obvious to any one who will give the subject a thoughtful consideration. Is it of no consequence whether the ministers and churches of this State, are in the habit of methodically investigating their fields, of intelligently accepting their whole responsibility, and steadfastly pushing forward their work, upon varied and far-reaching plans? Are we doomed to a fitful and spasmodic life—to extremes of fever and chill—signs of a seated debility? Is there no such thing, as a godly steadfastness and fidelity, on the part of ministers and churches, a manful courage and indomitableness of spirit—a patient

study of details, a deliberate intelligence of method reaching from year to year, an unwearied persistency in the face of obstacles, a sure return after every repulse—rising steadily higher, like the waves upon a rising tide—a settling down, with subtle currents, as of an inundation, upon the hidden foundations of iniquity, every single drop doing its work, as a solvent or a current? Is there no supernatural *order*, in the divine work; and cannot dependence be placed upon the Saviour's promise of the Holy Ghost to them that ask their Father for this gift? Can we not depend upon God, that he will show us how we can succeed in the work to which he has called us? and that he will really enable us, if we faithfully try, to carry the Gospel to every creature?

There can be but one answer to these questions; and we are justified in a deliberate and perfectly invincible confidence, that the churches of the State, duly portioning out among themselves the whole work that is to be done, making that work the subject of a minute, methodical, unwearied and delighted study, bringing every individual line and process under the light of God, in prayer and in that inquiring meditation which is also prayer, aiding one another with frequent communications and mutual reminders and counsels, will triumph gloriously. By *patient continuance* in well doing, they shall reap the reward.

Now this is exactly what is proposed to them, in asking for these statistical returns. Each church is requested, e. g., to state the population of its territorial parish. But how can it do this, unless it has determined what its parish is—in other words, what community its proper responsibility covers? Each church is asked, again, to tell us how many, in all this population, are embraced among its "people"—members of its congregation. But in doing this, it is obliged to ascertain precisely who they are who are reached by its labors, and to reflect upon the facts thus brought to view. It is desired to inform us, what proportion of the community has been *effectively* reached; and in answering that question, finds, perhaps, encouragement, perhaps reproof, certainly a fresh motive for action. It is, furthermore, requested to look steadfastly in the face, the inquiry, who are they whom you fail to reach—how many are they—and what proportion of the whole? Is there no value in this investigation? Is there no appeal or persuasion or suggestion, in the particulars thus brought under our eye? Is there no worth, in the attitude of mind and heart, implied in all this study, and the purpose involved in it—in the habit which it tends to cultivate?

We have no hesitation in expressing the opinion, that the effort on the part of pastors and churches, to make accurate returns, in the manner desired, will have an important tendency to cherish a habit of methodical study of the religious condition of both communities and individuals, and a readiness to apprehend and to adopt the best means of effectually reaching them; will help to make Christian efforts, over all the State, more systematic, more constant, more intelligent and more effective; and that this request for returns, itself affords to pastors an opportunity of bringing before their people, under circumstances of great advantage, the whole matter of *the church—its work, its privilege, and its responsibility.*

From the majority of the parishes, these returns can be made with little inconvenience, after a thorough investigation has once been carried through; and though incomplete, would yet be of great value in themselves, and of still greater value in their tendency to familiarize the people with the idea of *church responsibility for communities*; which is the principle upon which they are based, and the necessary foundation of all efforts to develop the working power of the churches.

Indications of the Returns.

Imperfect as the investigations of the year have necessarily been, they nevertheless furnish instructive hints. It would appear,

1. That the amount of neglect in these communities, great and ominous as it is, is yet less than has often been reported and much less than is found in many other parts of the country.

2. Those of our purely American communities that have had *a natural growth*, are (with an exception soon to be named) religious and church-going communities. This fact is strikingly illustrated in many instances.* But,

3. When the natural order of growth is broken up, and a community experiences a great depletion or sudden increase, our church system, as administered, fails to adjust itself satisfactorily to the new necessities. It appears to require new provisions, or, at least, a more watchful fidelity.

4. The exception referred to, under the second head, is that of communities in which some form of religious error has gained a strong hold upon the people. In some very marked instances these have resulted in an obstinate indifference to worship and to religious truth, and even to religious questions in general. In others, a mental indisposition of peculiarly mischievous character, substitutes for this indifference an acrid hostility. This epidemic—which in some localities has become endemic—is characterized by a general *habit of opposition;* a habit not of eclecticism or of criticism, but of attack and denunciation, not of broad survey and genial correction, but of perverse misconception and invective, readily sacrificing great truths and interests of religion, and the demands of a high toned Christian morality and honor, to an imagined exigency of some project of reform; and easily accept any creed but that of the Bible, and any prophet or king sooner than Christ.

In several of our communities the seeds of this bitterness have been perseveringly sown, and the results begin to appear, in a retrogression toward the paganism of the later empire; a virulent hatred of Christianity, an assertion of the sufficiency of philosophy and of the uselessness of religion, a contempt for worship and the Lord's day, and a doubt of immortality—to be inevitably succeeded, unless the tendency is checked, by a decay of morals and a dry rot within all the timbers of society. The neglect which is worst, is found in places where this *Oppositionism* has long been working in the popular mind.

5. Another cause of neglect is found in a spirit of *caste*, still present in

* See Appendix, D.

our society. Our churches have never thoroughly applied the remedy, furnished by the Gospel, for this inherited defect, or carried suitably into practice the principle of brotherhood which underlies their constitution. Were they really such households of the Lord as they profess to be, many evils would be prevented.

OUT-DISTRICTS.

As already remarked, no expectation was entertained of completeness in the tables, the present year. It was far otherwise in regard to the matter on which we now enter.

In this new effort to carry the Gospel to every creature, it was felt that before all else, those *localities* which our churches fail to reach, demand attention. Accordingly, earnest endeavors were made to secure such returns of out-districts as should enable us to present a complete descriptive list of all such places in the State. Circulars were sent to the churches, every available opportunity for bringing the matter to the attention of the pastors was improved, as well as every means of independent inquiry. Notwithstanding a very large number of ministers failed to make returns, a valuable result has been obtained. A list of about *two hundred* out-districts, is now in our possession, together with much information of serious significance. This list we do not propose to publish; but the Committee of every Local Conference will be put in possession of all the facts obtained, relative to the populations under the charge of its churches. For the use of the public at large, it is thought sufficient to give a specimen of the returns, designating the localities by numbers instead of names.

It is believed that the number of neighborhoods in the State, demanding some form of local religious effort in addition to the regular Sabbath ministrations, is much larger than has yet been reported. Many of these are cared for by other denominations; many, also, by our own; and for this reason, perhaps, have not been returned. But many others are still neglected.

Of those reported, a considerable number (owing to the imperfection of the returns, it is impossible to say exactly how many) are receiving a more or less faithful Christian attention. A growing activity has been increasingly evident during the past year, and in a number of instances, the efforts of pastors and churches have been rewarded with most gratifying success.

We commend to the prayerful consideration of ministers and all Christian people, the following

*Notes of Out-Districts.**

1. Population 190. People poor, proud and prejudiced. Very ignorant. Somewhat thievish. A branch meeting-house built. Much unwillingness to attend, or send children to the Sunday school. Services and school held regularly. Prejudices gradually yielding and attendance improving. (1)

* See also Appendix, D.

2. An out-district, distant from church. Population, French, Irish and American. Neglect total. No effort, except the circulation of a few papers. (4)

3. Five out-districts in one parish. Total population over 400. Nothing done for them. (2)

4. A large and strong church. Three large out-districts—villages of considerable size. No sustained effort reported, but no report, as yet, received from the *pastor*. (3)

5. A community of colored people, of 100 souls. Heathen. Have a Sunday school. Efforts, "without success." (5)

6. A whole town destitute. An old meeting-house still standing, and occupied occasionally, by another denomination. "People abundantly able to pay a good salary, but are not agreed." (9)

7. A strong church with four out-districts. On one road, no church-goer for miles. Movements recently commenced. (6)

8. A district of 50 families—far out of the reach of any church. Need a house of worship of their own. Movements recently started to aid them in building one. (8)

9. A district of over 70 families. Few of them attend elsewhere. Occasional meetings held. "Ought to have a minister of their own." (7)

10. Whole school districts wherein not three families attend any evangelical church. Universalism prevalent. (12)

11. The whole western border, the middle, and the south-western parts of a town—all out-districts. No efforts reported. (10)

12. Forty families. Most attend nowhere. Principally American. Intemperance, profanity and Sabbath-breaking abound. The people are satisfied to remain as they are. Have probably been thus neglectful and neglected for forty years or more.

Neighboring ministers have, at seasons, held meetings, for months together, but have given up. A Moravian labored for a year or more. Sunday schools have at times been maintained. The people have been visited by a colporter and by Bible agents. No efforts making now. (11)

13. Population 200—American. Distant four miles from any church. A small meeting-house. Place likely to grow. No stated preaching. (13)

14. A population of 600, mostly American, about one and a half miles from church. Two Sunday schools, Congregational and Universalist. Sunday evening meetings held frequently. "Should be regularly maintained." (15)

15. A considerable population, 300 or 400, within easy distance of a good church. Sixty years ago, became Free-Will Baptists, then Christian Baptists, then Garrisonites; now Come-Outers and Spiritists. Have a joint stock chapel, in which the stockholders can, by turns, put whomsoever they please. Hate "Orthodoxy."

No effort. Some of the children attend Sunday school. (14)

16. A manufacturing village. Population 200 or 300; mostly Romanist. A prayer-meeting chiefly under the conduct of the Methodists. (16)

17. More than half of the township, and three-fourths of its population. Utterly neglectful. The church reduced by emigration, and very weak.

Another denomination crowding in, with the avowed purpose of supplanting it. A Universalist region. Hardly a praying man to be found, The School district much divided. School broken up for several winters, and a good one, sure to be. Endeavor made to break it up, or prevent the teacher from reading the Bible and praying in school. (18)

18. A rural district, two miles or more from church. General neglect. owing to distance and to Universalism. (16½)

19. A feeble Home Missionary church in a village that has recently sprung up on a railroad, and where 70 per cent of the people must be counted as neglecters, and 50 per cent as wholly unconnected with any congregation—has three out-districts; one of them a very wicked place, a resort for dissipation. The church is not able fully to occupy its field. (17)

20. A railroad village of 20 or 30 families, poor and shiftless, and under the thumb of a grossly bad man. An effort made, not long ago, but given up—a failure. (19)

21. A strong church; has three out-stations. In the first a branch meeting held with most encouraging success; not less than 25 hopeful conversions. In the second, a layman has begun to hold meetings, and in the third, meetings have just been commenced. (24)

22. A Universalist neighborhood. No religious meeting or temperance addresses allowed in the school-house; but good attendance at the prayer-meeting recently started. (20)

23. From 20 to 40 families, mostly American. Methodists and Congregationalists working together harmoniously and successfully. (23)

24. A factory village one mile from church. Branch Sunday school recently commenced. Attendance good. (21)

25. A branch Sunday school recently established. Also a systematic visitation of the whole parish. Great improvement. (22)

26. A little manufacturing village. No effort reported. (25)

27. A very dark region. But some months since, a neighborhood prayer-meeting was started. Quite a number of families have been brought under the influence of the Gospel. Conversions have taken place. A great change visible. Not a child or youth (who had reached years of reflection) but has been hopefully converted. (26)

28. An old desolation. A good beginning made. (27)

28½. A rural neighborhood of 60 or 70 families; a considerable number neglecters. Pastoral visitation in connection with weekly neighborhood meetings greatly blessed. A revival. (30)

29. A small village. A Sunday school and prayer-meeting held with good effect. A change in the feeling of the people. (29)

30. A railroad village of about 50 families, mostly American. About 30 families habitual neglecters. Inclined to infidelity and lax morals. Sunday school suspended for lack of a room. A chapel needed. (28)

31. A population of 50. Only five or six persons attend occasionally. No effort reported. (31)

32. A neighborhood of 50 or 60 families, wholly neglectful, owing to distance, Universalism and Spiritism. No effort reported. (32)

33. A manufacturing village on a railroad. Population about 400. No

church members. A few Sabbath evening meetings have been held, with good attendance and excellent attention. The desire expressed for frequent meetings. (40)

34. A neighborhood of 150 or 200 persons wholly neglectful. No effort reported. (33)

35. A population of 200, mainly American. "Need a local prayer-meeting." (39)

36. A neighborhood of 40 or 50 persons, wholly neglectful. No effort reported. (34)

37. Mill village. Population 300—half Irish, half native. Some visitation and tract distribution. (38)

38. A community of 300 or 400 inhabitants, almost wholly neglectful. No effort reported. (35)

39. A population of 100 or 150. No effort reported. (37)

40. Population of 500 or 600, of Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists and Unitarians. A manufacturing railroad village—a mile or mile and a half from church. A good hall. Good weekly prayer meeting. Frequent preaching. Many attend at "the centre." "Ought to be a Congregational church." (36)

41. A manufacturing village on a railroad. Population about 300. Intemperance prevailed; but a Temperance movement has succeeded in getting hold of a dozen young men. Now, the time to start a meeting. (41)

42. A manufacturing community, near a railroad, of 200 families—mostly foreign, English, Scotch and others. A good church within easy reach; but the people will not go. A Sunday evening service recently opened. Attendance, 150, prospects very encouraging, if a chapel can be built. "There can not be imagined a place on the face of this earth" (said a neighboring minister, previous to the effort just mentioned) "more destitute of the Gospel than this factory village." (44)

43. A farming district. Very godless people. Seem to care for nothing. No effort reported. (42)

44. A railroad community, mostly American. A Unitarian congregation of from 40 to 80. A defunct Universalist society. Spiritism has prevailed a good deal. No Orthodox people, except two or three families on one of the borders; who attend in a neighboring town. No effort reported. (43)

45. A community of 125 families, largely Irish and German, two miles, or more, from church. Till recently nothing done for them. A neighborhood meeting with thorough visitation, by a lay helper, lately commenced, with very encouraging success. (45)

46. A district from two to three miles from church, population, 400 or more. Few regular attendants. Neglect results from distance, an old quarrel, and a vague social jealousy. Occasional Adventist preaching; but greatly disliked by many. Promising effort now in progress. (50)

47. An utterly wretched class of people—not very numerous—of low, foreign descent, though for two generations native—living in idleness, vice and squalor—ignorant, and thievish, reached by no religious influences, and the children uneducated; apparently inaccessible. No new efforts reported. (46)

48. People well off; but above receiving instruction. (49)

49. An Indian-mixed population—poor, ignorant and vicious. Seem to have no conscience left, on which to fasten. No effort reported. (47)

50. A most singular population; difficult to describe; ignorant and vicious. No effort reported. (48)

51. A border district. Neighborhood Meetings recently started. The people grateful, and disposed to do all they can to make the effort a success. Attendance from 30 to 60. (50 *a*)

52. A border neighborhood, mostly Irish. Population, 150. Efforts recently commenced, viz: A Sabbath School, neighborhood prayer-meeting, and preaching on alternate Sunday evenings, by ministers of the vicinity.

53. A district with an American population of about 300, one mile from the church. Fifteen years ago, the people almost wholly neglecters, and strongly inclined to infidelity. Infidel influence predominant. One leading man an atheist, another an open unbeliever—both active in promulgating their sentiments and in distributing Tom Paine's works and books of infamous immorality.

About fifteen years ago, a Union Sunday evening service was started in the school-house; and has been sustained to the present time, notwithstanding the district at one time voted to close the house against religious services, and forbade the opening of the day school with prayer. *And now*, the people generally attend public worship, and the character of the community has undergone an entire change.

54. A rural district of about 50 families. A spirit medium—a woman—discoursing in a hall, once a fortnight. No effort reported. (51)

55. A wealthy neighborhood. People largely neglecters, till recently. Sunday evening preaching conducted for some months with very encouraging success. (53)

56. An entire township. No Congregational church. Much ignorance and vice. (52)

57. Population, say, 500. Universalists, Nothingarians. Not very well educated. Early instruction neglected. No effort reported. (55)

58. A large community. No evangelical church. Much wealth, but much ignorance concerning religion, and a great deal of hatred and bigotry. A promising movement on foot for a church. (54)

59. A defunct Methodist church. No preaching in this part of the town for twelve or fourteen years. (56)

60. A factory village of several hundred souls. Children between 5 and 15 years, 318. Most of the people habitual neglecters. No movement reported. (61)

61. Meeting-house owned by the Baptists; since occupied by Methodists; now used by none. (57)

62. A large and rapidly growing village; likely to become a place of much importance. A school-house built by an earnest Christian man; which ought to be occupied at once by regular services on the Sabbath. Movement talked of. (60)

63. A thriving mission on the outskirts of a large town, started by a man who was not himself a member of the church. (58)

64. A factory village near an important town. "Ought to be a Sunday school." (59)

65. A railroad village. Contains but four families that attend church. (63)

66. A rural district. "People don't go to church much." "We are a kind of heathen here." Preaching and Sunday School only in summer. A Baptist elder, for a part of the time. Give him what they choose. Paid him $50 last year. "Don't know as they will give him much of anything, this year." (62)

Towns.

But in addition to the neighborhoods, just described, there are in Massachusetts not less than *twenty-four towns*, having no Orthodox Congregational church; and three others having only *quasi* Congregational churches. It must not be assumed, however, that these places are destitute of the Gospel, or that the absence of churches of our name is a proof of culpable neglect. Some of these towns were settled by Baptists, from Rhode Island, and retain their original character; some are old towns in which the original church became Unitarian, many years ago, and which have undergone very little change since that time; some are new and small—portions of towns that have been divided—the inhabitants continuing to attend at the old centres; two or three are situated among the mountains, having a sparse population, scanty and poor. In some, efforts looking toward the establishment of a church—which has now become desirable—are in progress, or are contemplated; and there can be no doubt that in several, possibly in a large number, of these places, beginnings ought soon to be made, with an eye to such a result. The matter requires fresh investigation.

One of them, e. g., which contained, in 1860, a population of 420, and, a few months ago, not less than 115 children between the ages of five and fifteen years, has neither church, Sunday School nor post-office; and the few who attend public worship are obliged to travel from five to eight miles. Some spasmodic efforts have been made by a church in a neighboring town—within whose parish, this region, in its present condition, properly falls—but with little result. It is a very needy missionary field.

In *another* of these towns, a growing settlement has been formed, within a few years, loudly calling for the labors of a missionary and a church.

Another, with a population of 319 has no church, and a Sunday School of only 35. The children between five and fifteen, were reported as numbering 84. There is no house of worship; all meetings must be held in an old and comfortless school-house. An effort is reported, to supply this lack. The township is a *mountain*.

A *fourth*, having a population of 239, and 44 children of the age named, is supplied with a Methodist church; and a *fifth*, containing 904 inhabitants, with a Methodist and a Baptist church, both *small and feeble*.

A *sixth*, with 605 inhabitants (children, 145) have a Baptist church; but this "ran out." Then, the Methodists entered upon the ground, and they in turn are reported as discouraged. "Religiously, the whole town is in a sad state."

A *seventh*, contained in 1860, a population of only 236; and children of the age before named, 42. It is reported as having no church, Sunday School, post-office, store or blacksmith's shop; and "only two partly evangelical families." A Sunday School was established there and kept up for a short time, with evident good results. A permanent effort should be made.

An *eighth*, with 619 people (and 153 children between the ages named) has an evangelical church of another denomination, which has neither preaching nor Sunday School. "It was supplied gratuitously last year, by a preacher living in a neighboring town. He wanted some pay, this year; but the people did not care enough to pay anything."

The Congregational church that once existed here, has only two surviving members. An unevangelical church that was closed for two years, has been reopened; but is without moral power. "Its only praying man died about three years ago."

These cases exemplify one class of difficulties that we must overcome in our endeavors to carry the Gospel to every creature.

It will be observed that two very small towns are reported as having no church at all.

Number of Out-Districts Reported from the Several Conferences.

The districts reported are divided among the Conferences as follows:

Andover Conference,	6	Middlesex South Conference,	15
Barnstable "	9	Middlesex Union "	13
Berkshire North (no Conference)	5	Norfolk "	3
Berkshire South Conference,	23	Old Colony "	11
Brookfield Asso. "	3	Pilgrim "	6
Essex North "	1	Taunton "	8
Essex South "	5	Woburn "	5
Franklin "	25	Worcester North "	3
Hampden "	35	Worcester Central "	3
Hampshire "	7	Worcester South "	1
Hampshire East "	12		—
Mendon "	1		200

Population of Out-Districts.

The population of forty-five out-districts is given in the reports as follows:

1 district,	615 inhabitants,		615	1 district,	175 inhabitants,		175
1 "	550 "		550	1 "	162 "		162
6 "	500 "		3,000	1 "	150 "		150
2 "	400 "		800	2 "	125 "		250
2 "	350 "		700	1 "	110 "		110
1 "	320 "		320	2 "	100 "		200
2 "	300 "		600	5	"less than 100	"(ave. 52)	260
12 "	250 "		3,000	—			—
3 "	200 "		600	45			11,622
2 "	190 "		380				

Average population of a district, 258.

If the remaining one hundred and fifty-five neighborhoods are one-half as large, (125,) their aggregate population is not less than 19,000. If only one hundred, then it is 15,500. But inasmuch as we have by no means a complete list of all the out-districts of the State, it would be manifestly imprudent to reckon the aggregate population of the whole at less than 25,000. It is probably more than that; and this without taking account of those townships which contain no Congregational church, of which not a few are inadequately supplied with the Gospel. These towns contained, in 1860, a population of 23,604.

Remarks upon the Out-Districts.

The *larger* neighborhoods are mostly manufacturing villages that have sprung up along our railroads or on mill-streams in their vicinity. Many of them, having had a rapid growth, and gathering a population of diverse origin and creed, present to our Eastern churches the same problem upon which churches at the West have been at work for half a century. With our greater advantages we ought to be still more successful than they have been, in solving it.

Some of the *most difficult* districts are to be found in a few retired farming regions, of poor soil, remote from markets and great thoroughfares of trade—or that were so while their character was forming—always sparse in population or else depleted within the last thirty years by excessive emigration. There are barren hill-sides, and there are sandy plains of pine forests, that for one or two generations have retained a godless, ignorant and more or less immoral population. And frequently, the poorer soils and the borders remote from centres have offered inducements, in their cheaper lands, to people of inferior energy and aspirations, and have lacked the inducements necessary to retain the children of the best capacity; and so, these districts, being too much neglected by the churches, have made little or no progress in anything good, and in some instances have become nests of vice, and occasionally, under the presidency of some bad man, colleges of crime, whose graduates are seen at the bar of our courts and in the uniform of the State prison.

There is a road running along the border of one our counties, that is lined, for twenty or thirty miles, with communities of low moral tone, containing much neglect and much irreligion. Among the mountains on the borders of the State, there is a little settlement, the name of which has become a word of contempt, for its ignorance and vice. In a secluded rural township, and also along the shores of one of our bays, are two communities, containing in the aggregate about 450 souls, that for two or three generations have been certainly an inconvenience to their neighborhood, from their idle and thievish habits, and have, hitherto, been proof against all efforts to elevate them—the descendants of deserters or stragglers from a foreign army, that was encamped on our coast during the Revolutionary war. A murderer, whose case attracted much attention here, and was noticed even beyond the water as an exemplification of the degradation of the American people and of the failure of republican institutions, was the nurseling of such an "out-district."

It is well for us to remember that New England—and especially Massachusetts—is an object of hatred to certain classes on both sides of the Atlantic; and that every fact that can be quoted to their discredit, will be sure to be seized upon and published abroad, very likely with exaggerations. But the facts that a searching investigation unearths here, can be paralleled many times over, anywhere beyond our borders.

The many thousands of poor foreigners who have come to dwell in our State add greatly to the number and size of its out-districts, and to the difficulties in the way of reaching them. They constitute a large and, for the present, a somewhat insoluble element in our population; forming a considerable percentage in nearly all the little new manufacturing centres, to which reference has been made. But others of these districts, again, owe their existence to an influence purely American; to abuses and perversions of Protestantism which have already been described.

We have now finished the very imperfect presentation of facts, which the returns enable us to present. Tens of thousands of our people are dwelling in neighborhoods that require local religious efforts, in addition to the regular ministrations of the churches, efforts that at the present time are inadequately supplied. Multitudes are not directly reached by any existing Christian agency.

These communities not only suffer in the persons of their own members, but act injuriously, often, upon all in their neighborhood. An untidy husbandry which allows thistles to go to seed, and nests of caterpillars to multiply along the fences, affords but a feeble image of the folly which indolent churches practice, in neglecting the outskirts of their parishes. Clean farming is the easiest and cheapest, as well as the most productive; and a thorough fidelity on the part of a church will prove an economy of money and of trouble, while fruitful also of higher results, in the growth of Christian virtue and the saving of souls. Neighborhoods left without the Gospel often become nurseries of infidelity—of grades varying from the highest to the lowest. Frequently they are the strongholds of intemperance and the seed-plots of crime. Sometimes they furnish a basis for operations for the division of the church that neglected them; and sometimes, for the establishment of another that rejects the Gospel. At the best, they hang as a dead weight upon it, withholding support that it ought to own. The question now arises,

WHAT SHALL BE DONE?

We reply:

I. In the main, these out-districts must be cared for *by the churches*; and to this end, the churches must *define their parishes*, and rouse their members to activity.

In no other way can it be made sure that every existing out-district comes under some acknowledged responsibility. Many neighborhoods have suffered a total neglect, in great part from the reason, that they lay between churches, neither of whom felt the pinch of a duty definitely recognized.

In no other way, again, can it be made sure, that every new neighborhood that shall hereafter be formed will be cared for from its beginning. Precisely here, is the weak point in our system, as now administered, which has left the way open, in so many places, for immorality and unbelief. There is a work that should *precede* what has hitherto been viewed as the work of the Home Missionary Society, or even the formation of a church that can apply for its aid. There are duties belonging to the church within whose diocese the growing railroad or factory village makes its appearance. But how can we expect these to be done, unless it is clearly understood, to whose bishopric the village belongs? They have, very often, been neglected. Nor can this fault be healed, except by a general return to the system so thoroughly applied by our fathers and sanctioned by the example of the church throughout the world, from the earliest ages,—each church acknowledging a certain territory as its special care. We have no thought of invading the congregations of our neighbors, of other names, but surely we are bound to look after our own. We earnestly invoke the blessing of heaven upon all their labor for Christ, but we also propose to neglect no smallest part of that which He assigns to us.

Then let us cover every square rood of the State with a responsible church inspection and care; so that not one Congregational family and not one neglected or neglecting family or individual shall remain, within our borders, whose name shall not be found upon some church book, or who shall be able to rise up and testify against us, in the last day—"No man cared for my soul!"

Thirdly: In no other way, can our churches be sure that they are mindful of their whole duty, or pursue far reaching plans for its fulfillment. How can they remind themselves of that which they have never stated to themselves? Or how form wise plans for an object that hovers in vagueness? This indefiniteness is a source of indolence and of folly; and the matter has gone so far, that many churches have almost lost their hold upon the *idea* that the church is a society for agressive action, the army of the Lord of hosts, and suppose that it is merely a fold, an association for the celebration of the Sacrament. But,

II. Having defined their parishes, it matters less *what* the churches do, in behalf of the out-districts, than in what spirit they do it, and, that, at any rate, they *do something*.

Anything, in real earnestness; anything, in prayer and faith, with a determined purpose, will be fruitful of good—anything, that they *do not forsake*. For there is no hope for them that turn back. And

III. That churches may be sustained in this holy courage and activity, it is important that they should help one another, with reminders, counsels and prayers—as already they are doing in their Conferences.

IV. It will probably prove to be necessary, in some counties, to employ a minister (as is now done in Hampden county) to act as a *County Assistant* to the churches in their great and difficult work. This matter is elsewhere considered.

But it may still be asked: After a church has fully accepted and laid out its work, what is it to do? We answer: It is to do, what the Lord of all

wisdom, in answer to its prayers, bids, and shows it how to do. There are, however, various respects in which our own understandings afford us light.

General Classes of Out-Districts.

All of these districts belong to one of three classes, requiring distinct general aims and methods. One of the first questions, usually answered with ease, must be, Ought this community to have a church of its own? If so, however unpromising the circumstances, this fact should steadily be kept in view and should shape our methods; and as soon as possible, a public beginning should be made, and the people given to understand that the enterprise is entered upon, and is not to be given up. No matter how much the people are at first divided, a gentle and loving indomitableness of spirit, will triumph, at last, over all obstructions and enmities.

If, however, the community be too small for a separate congregation, then the question comes, Is this neighborhood to be viewed as *permanently* an out-district? Or, ought its families to be gathered into an existing congregation? If the latter, then the circumstances plainly indicate a general system of endeavor very different from those appropriate in the instance previously mentioned; and instead of striving to rally their affections around a new centre of their own, we are bound to do every thing in our power to strengthen those associations which will attach them to the one already existing in their neighborhood.

When, on the other hand, we are satisfied that the population in question must remain too small to sustain a separate church, while it clearly requires *local* efforts, in addition to the privileges offered in the vicinity, we are again directed to a general policy, different from that prescribed in either of the other cases named; and while endeavoring to awaken a real interest in the enterprise carried on for their special benefit, we must be particularly careful also, to win them to the church which is their proper spiritual home.

Forms of Effort and Requisites of Success.

One of the best ways of benefiting out-districts, is an earnest endeavor to improve the tone of the church at the centre. For not seldom, this church presents a repulsive aspect to families dwelling at a distance. Spiritual coldness has made its services formal; has allowed roots of bitterness to bear fruit; or permitted social alienations, a silent and subtle class-jealousy, or even a positive mutual dislike, to develop itself between cliques or neighborhoods. Any victory of Christian charity, therefore, within the church, anything promotive of intercourse, friendliness or respect, would be a measure for the benefit of out-districts—and sometimes, would be all that is required.

It is not necessary that we should here go into a discussion of the value of branch Sunday schools, (never to be called "Missions,") of neighborhood meetings, of systems of visitation or "Bible reading." It seems important, however, to observe, respecting all efforts in which a number

of persons are expected to unite—as branch Sunday schools, neighborhood meetings and systematic tract visitation, that there are

Four Prerequisites to Success.

First, There must be a definite and determined aim—the fixed purpose *to reach* certain families and individuals.

Second, We need to avail ourselves of the principle of *individual responsibility*; committing the superintendence of each distinct work, to *one* person.

Third, We must not be unmindful of the value of *sacred song*, both as an attraction and as a mode of spiritual influence and nurture. Or,

Fourth, Of the necessity of regular *reports to the church*, the benefit of its counsels and prayers, and the attendant development and extension of interest.

Probably no instance of failure can be found, where these prerequisites were fulfilled.

"*Praise Meetings.*"

Some of our churches have recently been trying a mode of spiritual influence that has been too little used in our Puritan communion—meetings for praise. Every expression of Christian sentiment is a working of the spiritual leaven. But there is no more potent utterance of that spirit which is the leaven of the Kingdom, than the breathings of pious souls, in the chosen words, in the rhythm, the melodies and harmonies of long familiar and consecrated tunes. For many hearts, no form of speech is so penetrating and persuasive as this. Beyond question, we have here a mode of Christian influence, which may be employed with increased advantage, not only in Sunday schools, but in neighborhood meetings, and, indeed, in all our worshiping assemblies.

And it may not be wholly useless to add, that *singing schools*, under the direction of warm-hearted Christian leaders,—or of such persons associated with the music teacher,—may serve to prepare the way, in communities characterized by indifference or hostility, for influences of other kinds. Significant examples might be quoted, to enforce this suggestion.

Lay-Helpers.

If a church member, whether man or woman, becomes the leader of a prayer-meeting, the superintendent of a branch Sunday school, or the conductor of a preaching service in an out-district on the Sabbath, this member becomes in reality a *helper* of the church in its work, and would be properly so styled; and a church brother set apart by the church to the function of a public religious teacher, could, with propriety, in accordance with ancient and apostolic usage be called an *elder*. The teachers of the earliest churches bore this name; and the great Apostle to the Gentiles, in one breath, disclaimed authority and announced himself a "helper" of the churches. These are most venerable and most Christian names, both scriptural and descriptive. Now, the out-districts in our State require, not the creation of a new and inferior order of ministers, or the admission,

in large numbers, of incompetent persons to the full ministerial office—measures charged with disaster—but rather, a large increase in the number of these elders or "helpers." There are multitudes of capable men and women in our churches, whose souls are pining—though some of them know it not—for the privilege of such responsibilities as these out-districts impose. Give them their need, and you satisfy a double want.

But the supply of competent "helpers" may prove inadequate to the great demand. How are we to meet this want? As we have met the want of our Sunday schools—by a *special education;* not alone in seminaries, but mainly in Bible classes.

Have our pastors fully appreciated the dignity that still remains to them, now that the theological institutions have taken away the students in divinity that once sat at their feet, and do they still realize that, as bishops, each over a distinct diocese, this most important and difficult instruction is still a part of their care? In dignity and difficulty, as well as in variety and richness, there is no work like that of the pastor of an apostolic church; for the reason, that besides being an overseer and leader in this household of God, he is president also of a company of teaching elders, of helpers in the Lord's service—of brethren and sisters in Christ, whose education and training for wise Christian work is intrusted to his hands.

The Roman church does its work by trained bands of ecclesiastics, of every conceivable order and grade, who devote themselves wholly to their assigned labors. Thus, upon the papal system, that "church" which is "the body of Christ" and continues Christ's work, comprises only the ordained priests and the members of the various "religious societies." In the Protestant and evangelical view, the church itself is Christ's body; and every member of the church is bound to a share in the Lord's work. The meanest member is not to be despised and is not to be excused.

While it is not improper that a deacon or a deaconness, or a commissioned missionary of any other name, should be set apart to the work of "Bible reading," and be supported therein by the contributions of the church, the same privilege is open to all those to whom the Bible is the voice of God; and offers a beautiful and delightful form of labor, whose efficacy we have scarce begun to discover. No neglecting household is beyond its reach.

So, too, there is no law against the employment of colporters, who, like the wandering friars of the Romish church, shall traverse the districts remote from the sanctuary and sparsely settled, selling and giving away religious books and tracts. But, where churches are numerous, as in this State, it is much more appropriate that this work should be all done by the members of the churches, under the superintendence of their pastors. The selection of the books and tracts, with the work of distribution, unquestionably rests with them. God commits it to their hands, and it is a desertion of their duty to give it all up to others. They have no right to sell this privilege of Christian visitation to strangers; but for their own good and their Christian honor, as well as for the highest benefit of the families of their parish, they should themselves be the almoners of this divine bounty.

The work of tract distribution is now inexpensive. For, as we are authoritatively informed, the Society which most of our churches patronize

desires nothing more earnestly than that they should take the whole of it into their own hands, and offers to *furnish gratis all the tracts, the distribution of which the churches will report to its Secretary.* We commend this offer to those who love to do good.

But while careful to lose sight of none of these more direct methods of doing good, we ought not to forget the subtle and mighty power of "society"—of that daily intercourse and friendly association to which men owe so much of their happiness and also so much of their *character*. If the power of "society" can be turned into Christian channels, if this intercourse can receive a divine leaven, if public anniversaries and festivities, if more private social gatherings, and free, informal friendly entertainments, can be made gladsome with the light from above, and be so conducted as to keep up pleasant connections between families or neighborhoods that are in danger of misunderstanding each other, or so as to win back those who have gone off from the church in offense, nourishing the spirit of neighborly kindness, and that love which is almost the divine love, the church of God and the community at large will have new cause of gratitude. There are Christian ladies in our churches, endowed of God with a capacity and a tact for effecting such results; and this gift of help, government and healing, they ought to use.

Finally, who shall name those *hidden strivings*, of prayer and personal labor, known only to God and to the souls seeking and sought, for which Divine Providence affords opportunities to all? A Christian may be shut out from all others, but never from these.

The forms of labor that have been mentioned are open to the churches. It seems to be their duty to stimulate and encourage one another in all of them.

County Assistants.

But in some of our counties, a supplementary agency is needed, beyond the province of any church—or, indeed, of any Conference of churches, acting as such—to furnish. The "Benevolent Association of Hampden County" (established in connection with the Conference of its churches) has already undertaken to supply this want within that county. Acting upon the recommendation of the General Conference of 1863, to wit: that the Local Conferences should severally look after the work of Home Evangelization within their respective limits, this Association engaged a minister, Rev. W. C. Foster, who entered upon his duties upon the 17th of November, 1863, and has since given his whole time to labors among feeble churches and in destitutions, under the direction of a committee appointed for this purpose. The measure has more than met the expectations of its authors. The Committee say: "We wish thus publicly to testify, that God has gone before and prepared the way and crowned the effort with good success." "Since the day that Mr. Foster commenced his labors in Montgomery, we have not been in doubt, scarcely for a moment, what he should do next or where we should send him."

He has labored in different places with marked effect. His "general course has been, to visit every family in the parish, if possible; to converse

and pray with each, and attend a neighborhood meeting in the evening—unless it was convenient to hold a meeting at the Centre." He was frequently constrained to continue several weeks in one place. Many souls were turned to the Lord, feeble churches were strengthened, and pastors whose hearts had begun to wax faint were comforted and encouraged. The work still continues. The Committee remark in their Report, for the year ending in October, 1865: "Our labors, the last year, have been spread over a larger surface than during the year previous. . . Nearly all the dark and neglected spots in the county have been visited, the past year; so nearly so, that we feel authorized to say, that the Gospel has been preached to all the people in the county. At least, we may say, if to any it has not been preached, the fault is their own."

It is hardly necessary to add, that the plan continues to receive the cordial approbation of the churches and ministers of Hampden County.

We are unable to see, why a similar measure might not be expected to achieve good results in some other portions of the State—for example, in Berkshire and in Franklin Counties; and this is understood to be the opinion of the brethren of those Conferences.

In Berkshire, eight towns, out of thirty-one, contain no Congregational church; a very imperfect return reports twenty-five out-districts, some of them calling for the establishment of new churches, and some for the erection of chapels; while a number of the mountain churches, though self-sustaining are feeble; and four receive missionary aid. Is it not clear, that a *County Assistant* would here find enough to do; and could be employed with the greatest benefit? We believe that the expense of his support would be a saving of money—to say nothing of other results.

In Franklin County again, there are three towns having no Congregational church—and, at last accounts, there were two having no evangelical church of any name, in operation; twenty-five out-districts are reported, many of them calling for a measure and kind of labor that no neighboring church can furnish; while seven churches in the county are compelled to seek missionary aid; and others are very weak. We understand that there is no question in the minds of the brethren most nearly interested and who have given long and minute attention to the subject, whether a County Assistant could be here employed to advantage. The call for such labor is too loud to be misunderstood. It is clearly impossible to do the work in this county which imperiously appeals to our conscience and our love, without the help of such a ministerial laborer—as assistant to the pastors and churches.

The sole objection is, the difficulty of raising the necessary funds. But when any work of the Lord is plainly *necessary*, it surely ought to be possible, in a State like ours, to obtain the money. And the truth is, that the money will be raised and the work will be done—if not by us, by others; and we shall then lose the privilege which, in God's good providence, was our just property; and, proving false to our duty, shall pay the penalty of failure. At this moment, one portion of the work is taken up by a Society, that ought to be left at liberty to concentrate its whole strength upon the still more needy fields of the Middle States, the West and the

South. The American Sunday School Union, at very considerable cost—but by no means too great—is supplying our lack of service and looking after the out-districts of this very county. It is a reproof to us, that it can find anything to do. We are strong enough to do all our own work without help of any kind from abroad. It is to be hoped that the churches and the benevolent and wealthy citizens of Franklin County—and of other counties similarly situated—will soon take measures for adequately providing for *all* the destitutions within their bounds.* With the help of a County Assistant, they would be able not only to supplement their own lack of power, but also largely to develop the working force of their churches, so as, ere long, to reach every household within its bounds.

CONCLUSION.

In some way, this work *must be done.* Our churches can not continue their present neglect of these destitute localities, and themselves continue to live.† The torpor of which this inactivity is a symptom, if it holds, will grow, and will prove the torpor of death. The indifference which can surrender these neighborhoods to irreligion, will be sure to neglect also those growing classes which, in the midst of our churches turn their backs upon the Gospel. When Rome ceased to be formidable and victorious upon her extremest frontiers, her own hearths and altars began to be in peril; and our Christian firesides and sanctuaries are open to invasions which can not be repelled, so long as we leave the enemy to marshal and discipline his forces, undisturbed, along the outskirts of our parishes. The only "evidences of Christianity" that will suffice for philosophers, in these days, to say nothing of the masses, are evidences of *life.* Our fine logic and curious analogies are worthless, without that demonstration of the Spirit, which alone is power.

Every square rod of Massachusetts soil should be embraced in some parish; every household in the State should be enrolled under the watch and care of some church, that acknowledges responsibility for faithful endeavors to bless it with infinite benedictions; every soul within our borders should be looked after, should be sought out, should be pursued and followed up, if need be, with an invincible fidelity and patience of love.

In conclusion, this Committee proposes for the adoption of the General Conferences the following

STATEMENT.

1. It is the duty of the churches to cover the entire area of the State with a permanent, methodical, Christian inspection and care; to which end,—

2. It is important that every church, as was recommended by the last General Conference, define its territorial parish; taking the term as desig-

* Since these sentences were penned, the "Benevolent Association" of this County have appointed a Committee to find a suitable minister for this work, and have secured the services of a devoted and efficient agent, to collect the necessary funds.

† See Appendix to this Report, C.

nating the district within which, either solely, or jointly with neighbor churches, it holds itself accountable to use its best endeavors, in behalf not only of all persons connected with its own congregation, but also all who are connected with none.

3. The churches should find a way, by means of Branch Sunday Schools, Neighborhood Meetings, Christian Visitation, or otherwise, to reach all out-districts, so that there shall be no neglected places in Massachusetts.

4. It is of vital importance to the success of the churches in their local work, that pastors more generally institute arrangements for the thorough training of persons for the office of teachers in the Sunday School, and also for the more responsible office of *Lay-Helpers* in the work of evangelization.

By vote of the State Committee,

DANIEL P. NOYES,

Secretary of Home Evangelization.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX A.

THE STATE COMMITTEE ON HOME EVANGELIZATION.

CHAIRMAN.

Hon. WILLIAM B. WASHBURNE, of Greenfield.

VICE-CHAIRMAN.

Rev. EDWIN B. WEBB, D. D., of Boston.

SECRETARY.

Rev. DANIEL P. NOYES, of Boston.

RECORDING SECRETARY.

Rev. REUBEN T. ROBINSON, of Winchester.

TREASURER.

MARSHALL S. SCUDDER, Esq., of Boston.

MEMBERS.

Andover Conference,	Rev. Caleb E. Fisher, *ex officio.*
Barnstable "	Rev. Joseph B. Clark, "
" "	Capt. Nathaniel Doane.
Berkshire South Conference,	Rev. Nath'l H. Eggleston, *ex officio.*
" " "	Rev. Nahum Gale, D. D.
Brookfield "	Rev. A. E. P. Perkins.
Essex North "	Samuel J. Spaulding, D. D.,* *ex officio.*
" "	Rev. Daniel T. Fiske, D. D.,† "
Essex South, "	Rev. James M. Bacon,* "
" "	Rev. John S. Sewall,† "
" "	Dea. Putnam Perley.
Franklin "	Rev. Charles Lord, *ex officio.*
" "	Hon. William B. Washburne.
Hampden "	Rev. Emerson Davis, D. D.,§ *ex officio.*
" "	Hon. Thomas Carter.
" "	Rev. John W. Harding.

* First part of year. † Last part of year. § Deceased.

Hampshire East Conference,		Rev. JOHN A. SEYMOUR, *ex officio.*
Mendon	"	Rev. JACOB ROBERTS, "
Middlesex South	"	Rev. EDMUND DOWSE, "
" "	"	Rev. HENRY BULLARD.
Middlesex Union	"	Rev. ALFRED EMERSON, *ex officio.*
" "	"	Dea. JOHN PROCTOR,
Norfolk	"	Rev. STEPHEN H. HAYES, *ex officio.*
Old Colony	"	Rev. ISAAC DUNHAM, "
Pilgrim	"	Rev. DAVID BREMNER, "
"	"	Rev. EBENEZER ALDEN, Jr.
Suffolk North	"	Rev. DAVID T. PACKARD, *ex officio.*
Suffolk South	"	EDWIN B. WEBB, D. D., "
"	"	J. RUSSELL BRADFORD, Esq.
Taunton	"	Rev. EBENEZER DAWES.
Woburn	"	Rev. REUBEN T. ROBINSON, *ex officio.*
"	"	Rev. WILLIAM H. WILLCOX.
Worcester Central	"	Rev. AMOS H. COOLIDGE, *ex officio.*
" "	"	Rev. WILLIAM HOUGHTON. "
Worcester North	"	Rev. LEWIS SABIN, D. D.
General	"	Rev. JOSHUA W. WELLMAN, *ex officio.*
"	"	Rev. ALONZO H. QUINT, D. D. "
"	"	Rev. WILLIAM BARROWS.
"	"	Rev. HENRY M. DEXTER, D. D.
"	"	Rev. JAMES T. MCCOLLOM.
"	"	Dea. WILLIAM THURSTON.
"	"	MARSHALL S. SCUDDER, Esq.

MEMBERS AT LARGE.

Hon. REUBEN A. CHAPMAN.
Rev. BIRDSEYE G. NORTHROP.

APPENDIX B.

STATISTICS OF A PORTION OF THE PARISHES.

EXPLANATION.

In the tables below, the *Parish* is understood as the *territory* within which the church in question acknowledges responsibility for all Congregational and all neglected families.

The *Congregation* includes all of every age whom the pastor can properly call his "people"—those families and individuals excepted whose attendance is so infrequent as to make it very *doubtful*, whether their connection can be considered as more than *nominal*.

The *communicants*, embrace only resident church members.

By *nominal* members of the congregation, is understood, such persons as call themselves members, but whose connection practically amounts to little or nothing.

The *wholly unconnected* are those who habitually and purposely stay away from church and *are not directly reached* by the stated ministrations of the word.

It will be seen therefore, that these tables show, *first*, the population of the territorial parishes of the churches; *second*, the number and proportion of this population, statedly *reached* by each Congregational church *third*, the number and proportion, *effectively reached*; *fourth* the number and proportion, still remaining *unreached*.

The returns from three Conferences are tolerably complete; and, with those received from other parts of the State are here given.

The population not included in the "Congregation" or among "Neglecters," is connected with other denominations.

The marks + and — in the columns of percentages, signify a little *over* and a little *under*.

TABLES.

BARNSTABLE CONFERENCE.

Names of Churches and Branch Congregations.	Congregational.									
	Parish.	Congrega'n.		Church.			Neglecters.			
	Population.	Congregation.	Per cent on population.	Communicants.	Per cent on population.	Per cent on congregation.	Nominally in congregation.	Wholly unconnected.	Total of both.	Per cent on population.
Barnstable, West,	457	246	.54	65	.14	.22	41	170	211	.46
Centerville,	474	301	.62+	74	.15½	.24+	31	57	88	.18+
Hyannis,										
Chatham,	2,710	405	.15—	92	.03½	.23—	23	32	55	.02+
Dennis, South,	600	533	.89—	88	.14⅔	.16½	5	57	62	.10½
Falmouth, First,	920	593	.64½	157	.17	.26½	55	46	101	.12
East,	350	150	.43—	37	.11—	.25—		25	25	.07
North,	175	150	.85	75	.42	.56				
Waquoit,	298	243	.81+	64	.21½	.26	30	23	53	.21
Harwich,										
Harwichport,	728	350	.50—	48	.06½	.14—	250	128	378	.52
Orleans,	1,351	416	.31—	116	.08½	.28—	34	241	275	.20
Provincetown,										
Sandwich,	3,000	275	.09+	126	.04½	.43+	50	50	100	.03½
Truro, First,	564	277	.49+	110	.19+	.39+		12	12	.02
North,	262	235	.90	24	.09+	.10	20	7	27	.10+
Wellfleet, First,	1,750	580	.33	209	.11½	.36	25	40	65	.04—
Second,										
Yarmouth,	1,150	454	.39½	138	.12	.30+	11	41	52	.04½
Ware Chapel Dist.	190	30	.16—					160	160	.88+
Total,	1,340	484	.36	138	.10	.28½	11	201	212	.16—
West,										
Nantucket,	4,650	360	.08	199	.04	.55	70	2,955	3,025	.65
West Tisbury,	500	175	.35	60	.12	.34+	25	10	35	.07

FRANKLIN CONFERENCE.

Names of Churches and Branch Congregations.	Congregational.									
	Parish.	Congregat'n.		Church.			Neglecters.			
	Population.	Congregation.	Per cent on population.	Communicants.	Per cent on population.	Per cent on congregation.	Nominally in congregation.	Wholly unconnected.	Total of both.	Per cent on population.
Ashfield, First,	1,200	350	.28	101	.08¼	.29	115	320	435	.36
Second,	231	150	.64	65	.29	.43	10			.04+
Bernardston,	1,200	200	.17	52	.04	.26	10	50	60	.05
Buckland,	800	268	.33½	105	.13+	.35½	8		8	.01
Charlemont, First,	647	242	.37	91	.14	.38—			159	.25
East,	386	230	.62	72	.19	.31	30	54	84	.22—
Coleraine,	2,000	150	.07½	50	.02½	.33				
Conway,	1,045	589	.56	233	.23	.40—	203	253	456	.43+
Deerfield,	800	220	.27½	80	.10	.36+			360	.45
South,	1,047	642	.61	198	.19—	.38		135	135	.13—
Erving,	500	150	.30	16	.03+	.11—	150	200	350	.70
Gill,	635	200	.31	35	.05½	.17½	34	287	321	.50½
Greenfield, First,	800	200	.25	55	.07—	.27	250	100	350	.44—
Second,										
Hawley, East,	300	200	.67	60	.20	.30	22	48	70	.30
West,	230	100	.43+	46	.20	.46	160?	28	188	.80?
Heath,	650	50	.08	20	.03	.40	75	400	475	.73
Leverett,	964									
Leyden, no Cong. ch.	606									
Montague,	1,000	525	.33—	144	.09	.27	149	326	475	.30—
Munroe, no Cong. ch.	236									
Northfield,	1,712	100	.06—	60	.03+	.60	150	50	200	.12—
Orange,										
North,										
Rowe,	619									
Shelburne,										
Shelburne Falls,	2,000	380	.19	180	.09	.47	50	540	590	.29½
Shutesbury,	798									
Sunderland,	839	600	.72	270	.32+	.45		13	13	.02—
Warwick,	930	114	.12+	61	.06½	.54	80	508	588	.63
Wendell,	525	105	.20	25	.05—	.24—	75	345	420	.80

CHURCHES IN OTHER CONFERENCES.

Names of Churches and Branch Congregations.	Congregational.									
	Parish.	Congrega'n.		Church.			Neglecters.			
	Population.	Congregation.	Per cent on population.	Communicants.	Per cent on population.	Per cent on congregation.	Nominally in congregation.	Wholly unconnected.	Total of both.	Per cent on population.
Acton,	1,200	400	.33	120	.10	.30	100	800	900	.75
Ashby,	1,100	296	.27	124	.11	.42	88		400	.36
Assabet, Un. Evan.	1,024	372	.34	65	.06	.17	124	111	235	.22
Boxford, First,	550	300	.55	133	.24	.44			250	.45
Boylston,	830	400	.48	115	.14	.29			430	.52
Dartmouth, South,	482	191	.40	48	.10	.25		70		.14
Dover,	650	95	.15	27	.04	.28	15	30	45	.07
Essex,	1,600	450	.28	123	.08	.27			1,050	.66
Gloucester, West,	600	100	.17	31	.05	.31	31	469	500	.83
Hamilton,	600	500	.84	144	.24	.29			200	.33⅓
Housatonic,	893	257	.29	110	.12	.43	120	157	277	.31
Lincoln, First,	710	248	.35	86	.12	.34				.08
Lynnfield Centre,	305	204	.67	60	.20	.30			93	.30
Manchester, E.P.T.	636	443	.70	107	.17	.24	24	193	217	.34
Manchester, F.V.T.	386	274	.70	97	.25	.35	33	116	149	.39
New Salem, Center,	200	125	.62	53	.26	.35	25	50	75	.37
Paxton,	668	427	.65	80	.12	.19			199	.30
Peru,	512	150	.30	100	.20	.66	50	330	380	.70
Rehoboth,	500	150	.30	107	.21	.71	150	200	350	.70
Southbridge,	4,131	250	.06	137	.03	.55	50	1,300	1,350	.33
Stockbridge,	1,700	502	.30	231	.14	.46		40		.03
Sudbury, Un. Evan.	600	350	.58	150	.25	.42				
Templeton,	2,500	459	.18	119	.05	.26	37	416	453	.18
Wenham,	700	425	.60	93	.13	.22	125	150	275	.40

A few other returns have been made, but lacking in completeness, are not published.

We would call special attention to the columns giving the percentage of neglecters. Under this term are included all persons who habitually neglect the Sanctuary or are very infrequent in attendance, together with the members of their families. A very great diversity will be observed, ranging between .01 and .83. In all cases where the percentage is large, the fact is very easily accounted for, being the result of obvious causes. In many instances the remedy is equally obvious.

APPENDIX C.

PLYMOUTH CONFERENCE.

Tabulated returns have been received from nine of the twelve towns of this Conference. But as a special investigation of this field is now contemplated, their publication is deferred.

The following interesting statement is furnished by the Committee of the Conference, showing

THE ATTENDANCE ON PUBLIC WORSHIP.

	The attendance on public worship on a fair day could be.	PER CENT.	The attendance is.	PER CENT.	Neglecters.	PER CENT.
Carver	635	.60	350	.33	285	.27
Halifax	443	"	200	.27	223	.33
Hanover	997	"	425	.27	572	.33
Hanson	717	"	245	.20	472	.40
Kingston	975	"	530	.32	445	.28
Marshfield	1,080	"	600	.33	480	.27
Plymouth	3,645	"	1,750	.29	1,895	.31
Plympton	554	"	200	.22	354	.38
Scituate	1,361	"	600	.26	761	.34
South Scituate	947	"	500	.32	447	.28
Pembroke	893	"	300	.20	593	.40
Duxbury	1,426	"	525	.22	901	.38
	13,673		6,225	.27		.33

It appears, therefore, that in these towns, of the 60 per cent, supposed to be able to be present at public worship, only 27 per cent are found in the sanctuary, while 33 per cent — more than half — are very frequently absent.

The subjoined return has been kindly furnished by members of the "Church of the Pilgrimage," respecting

THE TOWN OF PLYMOUTH.

Names of Churches or Societies.	No. of persons old and young, belonging to the congregation.	Families belonging to congregation.	Congregation on fair Sabbaths.	Place of worship.
1st Parish, Unitarian,	650	114	250	Church.
2d Parish, Orthodox, at "Ponds,"	325	45	100	"
3d Parish, Orthodox, Pilgrimage,	725	145	300	"
4th Parish, Orthodox, Eel River, (Old)	325	45	100	"
5th Parish, Orthodox, Eel River, (New)	325	45	100	"
Methodist,	170	30	60	"
Baptist,	325	60	250	"
Episcopal,	50	16	40	"
Freewill Baptist, (at Russell Mills)	300	40	75	"
African,	50	16	40	"
Universalist,	325	60	250	"
Second Advent,	150	30	60	Hall.
Spiritist,	150	60	100	"
Do not attend, (in village and north to Kingston line,)	625	125		
	4,495	331	1,725	
Not known,	1,700			
Total,	6,195			

Taking the population of Plymouth as 6,195, and counting *Necromancists* as neglecters, it would appear that 3,620 persons, or about 58½ per cent, are embraced in the religious congregations; while of the remainder, no less than 1,700, or over 27 per cent seem to constitute a floating and "unknown" population — seamen, perhaps, and laborers in manufactories, with others who may have been overlooked.

Of the 3,620 connected with the congregations, 1,625 may be expected to be present on a fair day, or about 45 per cent. But 60 per cent, or more than 2,100, could attend; so that 15 per cent., or over 500, are unnecessarily absent.

Over 40 per cent of the population are not statedly reached by the churches.

GAINS OF THE CHURCHES IN 1864.

COUNTIES.	Number of churches.	Number of resident members.	Added on profession of faith.	Removed by death or excommunicated.	Gain, (+). Loss, (—).	Average for each church.	Added by letter.	Removed by letter.	Gain, (+). Loss, (—).	Average for each church.	Gain or loss on the whole.	Average for each church.
Barnstable, . . .	21	1,696	50	32	18+	.85+	14	20	6—	.28—	12+	.57+
Berkshire, . . .	33	3,759	100	75	28+	.76+	60	96	36—	1.1 —	11—	.33—
Bristol, ...	26	2,987	79	60	19+	.73+	40	72	32—	1.23—	13—	.50—
Dukes, ...	3	170	8	4	4+	1.33+	2	2			4+	1.33+
Essex, ...	66	9,158	349	198	151+	2.3 +	277	231	46+	1.4 +	197+	3. +
Franklin, . . .	30	2,637	66	109	43—	1.41—	59	86	27—	.9 —	70—	2.33—
Hampden, . . .	35	4,280	518	117	401+	11.4 +	203	127	76+	2.2 —	477+	13.6 +
Hampshire, . . .	39	6,188	432	162	270+	6 9 +	183	142	41+	1. +	311+	8. +
Middlesex, . . .	70	9,564	401	195	206+	2.9 +	256	258	2—	.03—	204+	6.9 +
Nantucket, . . .	1	211	15	6	9+	9. +	2	7	5—	5. —	4+	4.
Norfolk, ...	44	4,558	227	132	95+	2.2 +	142	98	44+	1. +	139+	3.2 +
Plymouth, . . .	34	3,354	67	90	23—	.7 —	40	38	2+	.06+	21—	.6 —
Suffolk, ...	17	5,025	247	85	162+	9.5 +	263	174	89+	5.1 +	251+	14.5 +
Worcester, . . .	70	9,925	471	313	158+	2.25+	249	324	75—	1. —	83+	1.2 +
Totals, . . .	489	63,512	3,030	1,578	1,518+	2.97+	1,790	1,675	298+	.24+	1,682+	3.2
					66—				183—		115—	

GAINS OF THE CHURCHES IN 1865.

COUNTIES.	Number of churches.	Number of resident members.	Added on profession of faith.	Removed by death or excommunicated.	Gain, (+). Loss, (—).	Average for each church.	Added by letter.	Removed by letter.	Gain, (+). Loss, (—).	Average for each church.	Gain or loss on the whole.	Average for each church.
Barnstable, . . .	20	1,837	42	37	5+	.25+	9	10	1—	.4 —	4+	.2+
Berkshire, . . .	33	4,818	132	96	36+	1.1 +	81	108	27—	.9 —	9+	.3+
Bristol, ...	26	3,683	91	59	32+	1.2 +	58	66	8—	.3 —	24+	.9+
Dukes, ...	3	198	2	3	1—	.33—		3	3—	1. —	4—	1.3—
Essex, ...	66	10,426	230	108	122+	1.8 +	174	212	38—	.6 —	84+	1.3+
Franklin, . . .	30	3,018	73	82	9—	.33—	48	72	24—	.8 —	33—	1.1—
Hampden, . . .	36	5,044	185	102	83+	2.3 +	143	160	17—	.5 —	66+	1.8—
Hampshire, . . .	39	6,987	264	125	139+	3.8 +	175	155	20+	.5 +	159+	4.1—
Middlesex, . . .	71	11,765	464	185	279+	3.9 +	346	254	92+	1.3+	371+	5.2+
Nantucket, . . .	1	276	2	6	4—	4. —	2	6	4—	.25—	8—	8. —
Norfolk, ...	45	5,431	144	105	39+	.9 +	146	111	35+	.8 +	74+	1.6+
Plymouth, . . .	34	3,737	82	76	6+	.2 +	41	50	9—	.3 —	3—	.1—
Suffolk, ...	17	6,014	151	51	100+	5.9 +	203	171	32+	1.9 +	132+	7.7+
Worcester, . . .	72	11,721	291	270	21+	2.9 +	270	325	55—	.7 —	34—	.5—
Totals, . . .	493	74,955	2,153	1,305	862+	1.7 +	1,696	1,703	179+	.014-	923+	1.7+
					14—				186—		82—	

SUMMARY AND COMPARISON.

	1864.	1865.
Net gain of additions by profession, upon removals by death, or excommunication,	1,452	848
Net gain of additions by letter, upon removals by letter,	115	
Net loss by removals by letter, upon additions by letter,		7
Average net gain of each church, by profession, upon removals by death or excommunication,	2.97	1.71
Average net gain of each church, by letter, upon removals by letter,	.24	
Average net loss of each church, by letter, upon additions, by letter,		.01
Average net gain of each church, upon the whole,	3.21	1.7

APPENDIX D.

The following statement furnishes an illustration of the observation made in the report: —

Rev. Samuel J. Spalding, D. D., of Newburyport, writes, that "in the winter months of 1857, a special effort was made by members of the Whitefield Church, to ascertain the moral needs of the population of our city." . . . "The religious condition of 928 families was carefully investigated; also, that of the operatives in three of our four cotton factories. It was supposed that our inquiries reached about one half of our entire population, and covered at least two thirds of the destitute districts of the city. The population of Newburyport in 1855, was 13,354. Among the 928 families, 41 families were found which had no place of worship. In a few instances, some of the children attended a Sabbath School. One hundred and seventy-seven families were foreigners, and for the most part connected with the Roman Catholic Church."

This investigation covered the portions of the city where neglect was supposed to be most frequent, and omitted those portions where there was little or none. But assuming that no more than one half of the neglect was ascertained, the number of families in the city without church connection, would be but 82; and reckoning seven persons to a family, the number of individuals, 574, or only a little over four per cent of the population. The statement affords no clear indication concerning the number of persons whose connection with the congregations was merely nominal, nor have we any sure basis of estimating the number. But if it were three fold that of the wholly unconnected, this would give us only about 17 per cent of neglecters, or a little over one sixth of the population. It might be much larger then this, and still be much smaller than the usual newspaper estimates.

This City is not, however, quite a fair example of the class of towns referred to in the Report. Of late years, owing to the establishment of cotton mills, a considerable accession has been made to its population, from abroad. More favorable examples of the successful operation of Christian institutions are afforded among our country towns. But ought not our system to be flexible and vigorous enough to adapt itself to all emergencies?

APPENDIX E.

In the first of the two cases which follow, the Orthodox Church is weak; and has struggled, for years, against the preponderating influence of Universalism. The second affords, probably, a good example of a mixed community, embracing different denominations, and both a village and a farming population.

A RURAL PARISH.

"Our congregation has lost by emigration; the families coming in being either Romanists, Universalists, or Nothingists. The number of occasional attendants on public worship has increased. But the darkest part of the picture is the *apathy* of professing Christians. This is awful, and almost beyond endurance on the part of the few who mean to live.

The number of inhabitants within the limits of the Parish is 1,007, and the number of families, 200. From 120 of these families, one or more persons attend worship *statedly*; from 45 some attend *occasionally*; while 38 families are *habitual neglecters*.

The Places of Public Worship are,

	Sittings.	Av. Attendance.
Congregationalist,	320	135
Methodist,	110	40
1st. Universalist,	225	125
2nd. "	225	25
Campbellite,	60	20
Totals,	930	345

Occasional attendants,	165
No. who attend on evangelical preaching out of the Parish,	100
Romanists and others who go here and there,	140
Sick and infirm,	67
Non-attendants,	190
Whole number,	1,007

But a classification, which I prefer, is the following:—

Number of persons, who, at public worship or by family instruction are brought under strictly evangelical influence,	325	
Nominally Evangelical,	185	682
Unevangelical,	307	
Neglecters of all religion,	190	
Total,	1,007	

Subtracting 100, who come under evangelical influence from churches out of our limits, the remaining 225 constitute the *acting force* of evangelical Christianity on this ground. It will be seen then, that *more than two thirds* of the entire population of the Parish are virtually turned away from the Gospel in its saving influences. Woe be unto us if we are not moved by such facts as these, to *seek and obtain* help from God by the *outpourings of His Spirit*."

COUNTRY AND VILLAGE.

"The census to which you refer was taken in July, 1862. The whole number of families in this Parish is 370; and the population, 1,483.

Denominations.	Families.	Persons.
Congregational,	136	544
Baptist,	71	258
Universalist,	51	201
Romanist, *	38	151
Episcopal,	1	4
Families attending no Church,	60	253
" " Baptist Church out of town,	13	49
	370	1460
Families attending no Church,	60	
Total number of Church-going families,	310	
* Romanists in Prot. families, and not included above,		23
		1,483

SITTINGS: — Congregational, 660; Baptist, 342; Universalist, 290. Total, 1,292. Average congregations on pleasant Sabbaths: Congregational Church, 350; Baptist, 175; Universalist 75. Total, 600.

The Universalists have services, on an average for the year, only about one Sabbath in three. The numbers stated as the average attendance at each place of worship were a *guess* based upon observation and inquiry, and not the result of an accurate count.

From what I hear, I infer that the number of persons attending the Universalist meeting, is somewhat *less* than at the time this census was made. The number at the Baptist church is no greater; I think it is not quite so great. The population has increased by perhaps 100; meanwhile the number attending my own church has increased considerably. The number of families has increased from 136 to 150, and the average attendance from (about) 350 to more than 400. A considerable number of these *new* attendants are from the ranks of *non*-attendants. Our Sabbath School, also, has increased from 228 to nearly 275."

The General Conference of Massachusetts.

1867.

MINUTES

OF THE

EIGHTH ANNUAL SESSION,

HELD IN THE

CALVINISTIC CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,
FITCHBURG,

SEPTEMBER 10-12,

WITH

REPORTS AND ESSAYS.

BOSTON:
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1867.

OFFICERS.

Committee on the Union of the General Conference and the General Association, acting also as Provisional Committee on the part of the Conference for 1868.

Rev. Joshua W. Wellman, Newton.

Rev. Alonzo H. Quint, D. D., New Bedford.

Rev. Daniel T. Fiske, D. D., Newburyport.

Bro. William B. Washburn, Greenfield.

Bro. Reuben A. Chapman, Springfield.

Recording Secretary.

Rev. Joshua W. Wellman, Newton.

Statistical Secretary.

Rev. Alonzo H. Quint, D. D., New Bedford.

Treasurer.

Bro. Stephen T. Farwell, Boston.

MINUTES.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES OF MASSACHUSETTS, convened in the meeting-house of the Calvinistic Congregational Church and Society of Fitchburg, on the tenth day of September, 1867, at a quarter past five o'clock, P. M., and there being a quorum present, Rev. Alfred Emerson called the meeting to order. Rev. Edmund K. Alden, D. D., of Boston, was chosen Moderator, and, on taking the chair, conducted the devotional exercises, after which Rev. David Bremner, of Plymouth, was chosen Scribe, Rev. Alonzo H. Quint, D. D., of New Bedford, was chosen Statistical Secretary, and Bro. Stephen T. Farwell, of Cambridge, Treasurer.

The Conference then proceeded to appoint Committees as follows:

Committee of Arrangements.—Rev. Joseph Emerson, of Fitchburg; Rev. James T. McCollom, of Medford; Bro. Jacob Haskell, of Fitchburg.

Committee on Credentials. — Rev. Samuel J. Spalding, D. D., of Newburyport; Bro. Samuel Blake, of South Abington; Dea. Alvan Simonds, of Boston.

Committee on Nominations. — Rev. George N. Anthony, of Marlboro'; Bro. Lyman White, of Phillipston; Bro. Eleazer Boynton, Jr., of Medford.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

Hon. Linus Child, Rev. Lewis Sabin, D. D., Hon. Reuben A. Chapman, Rev. Ebenezer K. Alden, D. D., Nathan Allen, M. D., Rev. Robert Crawford, D. D., and Rev. Charles R. Palmer, appeared before the Conference as a Committee of the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society, and presented a communication containing a vote passed at the Annual Meeting of said Society held at Boston in May last. The vote was as follows:

Voted, That a Committee of seven be now appointed to confer with the General Conference of Massachusetts at their next meeting, on the con-

nection, which, if any, may be established between this Society and the State Conference, with a view to providing a plan for the union of the cause of Home Evangelization with the appropriate work of this Society.

On motion of Rev. James T. McCollom, of Medford, it was

Voted, That the subject be referred to the Committee on the Union of the General Conference with the General Association, with instructions that this Committee confer with the Committee of the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society in regard to the relation of that Society to the work of Home Evangelization.

The Conference then adjourned to meet at half past seven o'clock, P. M.

Tuesday Evening. The Conference assembled at half past seven o'clock. Devotional exercises were conducted by Rev. James T. McCollom, of Medford, after which a sermon was preached by Rev. Edwin B. Webb, D. D., of Boston, from the text, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me."—John xiv. 1.

Adjourned to meet at half past eight o'clock on Wednesday morning.

SECOND DAY.

Wednesday, September 11. At half past eight o'clock the Moderator called the Conference to order. Rev. John W. Chickering, D. D., of Boston, conducted the devotional exercises, which were continued half an hour.

After the services, the Chairman of the Committee on Credentials reported the names of the Members of the Conference, so far as they were present.

ROLL OF DELEGATES.

Andover Conference:—

Rev B. Franklin Hamilton.
Rev. James P. Lane.
Bro. Nathan W. Frye.
Bro. Samuel Parker.
Dea. Albert Abbott.

Barnstable County Conference:—

Rev. Edwin Seabury,
Rev. George H. Morse.
Bro. Valentine Doane.
Bro. Ansel Lewis.
Dea. J. Faunce.

Berkshire South Conference:—

Rev. Amos E. Lawrence.
Rev. George Mure Smith.
Bro. Arthur Gilman.

Brookfield Conference:—

Rev. Edwin L. Jagger.
Rev. Samuel Dunham.
Bro. Noah D. Ladd.
Bro. David W. Carpenter.

Essex North Conference:—

Rev. Samuel J. Spalding, D. D.

Essex South Conference:

Rev. James M. Bacon.
Dea. Charles M. Richardson.

Franklin County Conference:—

Rev. Elijah Cutler.
Rev. Edmund H. Blanchard.
Dea. Luke Leach.
Dea. Ira M. Stoughton.

Hampden County Conference:—

Rev. Simeon Miller.
Bro. George Fowler.
Bro. Obadiah W. Wilcox.

Hampshire East Conference:—

Rev. Warren H. Beaman.
Rev. William W. Woodworth.
Bro. Andrew T. Judd.

Mendon Conference:—

Rev. Noadiah S. Dickinson.

Middlesex South Conference:—

Rev. George N. Anthony.
Rev. Henry J. Richardson.
Dea. Eben Eaton.
Dea. Lowell Coolidge.

Middlesex Union Conference:—

Rev. William W. Parker.
Rev. Horace Parker.
Dea. Joseph Farwell.
Bro. Albert H. Hodgman.
Bro. Jacob Haskell.

Norfolk Conference :—

Bro. Samuel Blake.
Bro. Elbridge Torrey.

Old Colony Conference :—

Rev. John P. Cleveland, D. D.
Rev. Edwin Leonard.
Dea. Moses H. Swift.
Dea. George W. Haskell.

Pilgrim Conference :—

Rev. David Bremner.
Rev. Alexander Fuller.
Dea. Henry B. Barstow.

Suffolk North Conference :—

Rev. Albert H. Plumb.
Rev. Asa Bullard.

Suffolk South Conference :—

Rev. Edmund K. Alden, D. D.
Rev. Henry J. Patrick.
Dea. William Lincoln.
Dea. Alvan Simonds.

Taunton and Vicinity Conference :—

Bro. Charles Haskins.
Dea. Joseph Brown.

Woburn Conference :—

Rev. James T. McCollom.
Rev. William H. Dowden.
Dea. George R. Morrison.
Bro. Eleazer Boynton, Jr.

Worcester Central Conference :—

Rev. Ebenezer Cutler, D. D.
Rev. George E. Sanborn.

Worcester North Conference :—

Rev. Lyman White.
Rev. Daniel Wight.
Dea. Allen Folger.
Dea. Termira F. Shumway.

EX OFFICIIS.

Rev. Joshua W. Wellman, *Recording Secretary.*
Dea. Stephen T. Farwell, *Treasurer.*
Rev. Alfred Emerson, *Pastor of the Church.*
Rev. Alonzo H. Quint, D. D., *Statistical Secretary.*
Rev. Robert Crawford, D. D., *Preacher.*
Rev. Edwin B. Webb, D. D., *Preacher.*

FROM CORRESPONDING BODIES.

Rev. Samuel R. Rosboro, from the General Conference of Missouri.
Rev. David Garland, from the General Conference of Maine.
Rev. Pliny H. White, from the General Convention of Vermont.
Rev. George Dusten, from the General Association of New Hampshire.

BUSINESS.

The Constitution and By-Laws were read by the Recording Secretary.

A partial Report of the Committee on the Union of the General Conference with the General Association was made through its Chairman, the Rev. Joshua W. Wellman, as follows:

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE UNION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE AND THE GENERAL ASSOCIATION.

The General Conference at its Annual Meeting in 1866, at Northampton, voted to refer the question of the union of the General Conference and the General Association, upon the terms proposed by the latter in 1863, to the Local Conferences.

Your Committee, having been officially informed that a majority of the Local Conferences had voted in favor of the proposed union, immediately, in accordance with instructions, conveyed the offer of the General Conference to unite with the General Association, to the Secretary of the latter, Rev. Alonzo H. Quint, D. D., requesting him to present it to the General Association for their action, at the earliest opportunity.

The General Association, at its Annual Meeting held at Greenfield in June last, voted unanimously to accept the offer of the General Conference, and to unite with that body upon the terms proposed.

The proposed union is thus virtually consummated. Nothing remains but for your Committee, in accordance with instructions, in connection with a similar Committee of the General Association, "to draw up a Constitution for the united body, to be presented to it at its first meeting, and to designate the time and place of said meeting."

As the Congregational Churches of Lowell have kindly invited the united body to hold its first meeting with them, the General Association of the Congregational Churches of Massachusetts will *probably* be called, by the joint Committee, to meet in that city, on the *third Tuesday of June*, 1868.

THE MASSACHUSETTS HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY AND HOME EVANGELIZATION.

The joint Committee of the General Association and General Conference of Massachusetts, through its Chairman, Hon. W. B. Washburn, reported the following resolutions :

Resolved, That we recommend that the whole work of Home Evangelization be committed to the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society, with the hope that the Executive Committee of said Society will be increased from *seven* to *nine*, two members of which shall be nominated by this body.

Resolved, That we also recommend that the Conference appoint their Committee on Home Evangelization as heretofore, to serve till superseded by the new body.

The Report, with the Resolutions, was accepted and adopted.

HOME EVANGELIZATION.

Hon. W. B. Washburn, of Greenfield, then delivered an Address upon the subject of Home Evangelization.

The Report of the State Committee on Home Evangelization was presented by the Secretary, Rev. Daniel P. Noyes, and after remarks by Rev. Asa Bullard, of Cambridgeport; Dea. Obadiah W. Wilcox, of Springfield; Rev. J. Jay Dana, of Becket; Rev. George Trask, of Fitchburg; Dea. J. Russel Bradford, of Roxbury; Rev. William C. Foster; Rev. Mr. Mack, of Tennessee, and Hon. W. B. Washburn, of Greenfield, was accepted and adopted with the recommendation,

First, of the appointment of a Special Committee, to consider the subject of the appointment of County Assistants, in certain portions of the State, and to propose any action in their judgment expedient.

Secondly, of the appointment of a Committee to inquire what can be done to promote habits of Christian intimacy and a spirit of brotherhood among the members of the Church; and, particularly, whether it is expedient to make the *Neighborhood Meeting* and the *Fellowship Meeting*, or either of them, a part of our stated Church privileges and instrumentalities.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER.

The Treasurer of the Conference presented his Report, which was referred to the Committee on Finance.

The following Committees were appointed at the suggestion of the Nominating Committee :

Finance Committee.—Dea. Stephen T. Farwell, of Cambridge; Dea. Alvan Simonds, of Boston; Dea. Curtis Lawrence, of Groton.

Bro. Jacob Haskell, of Fitchburg, was chosen Auditor.

The Committee on the Union of the General Conference and General Association was appointed, on the part of this body, a Provisional Committee for the coming year.

Committee on County Assistants.—Rev. A. H. Plumb, of Chelsea; Rev. Nathaniel H. Eggleston, of Stockbridge; Dea. Obadiah W. Wilcox, of Springfield.

Committee on Promotion of Christian Fellowship.—Rev. James P. Kimball, of Falmouth; Rev. Horace Parker, of Ashby; Hon. William B. Washburn, of Greenfield.

Committee on Temperance.—Rev. Samuel J. Spalding, D. D., of Newburyport; Rev. William Barrows, D. D., of Reading; Rev. Henry J. Patrick, of West Newton.

To be nominated by the General Conference as members of the Executive Committee of the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society, Rev. Nahum Gale, D. D., of Lee, and Bro. Joseph S. Ropes, of Roxbury.

On motion of Rev. Samuel J. Spalding, D. D., of Newburyport, it was

Voted, That the Statistical Scribe be reappointed as the Committee on the State of Religion.

TEMPERANCE.

Rev. John W. Chickering, D. D., of Boston, addressed the Conference on the subject of Temperance.

On motion of Dr. Spalding, it was

Voted, That the paper read by Rev. Dr. Chickering be referred to the Special Committee on the subject of Temperance.

Also Voted, That the Resolution offered by Rev. Alfred Emerson, in favor of sending delegates to the Temperance Convention soon to be held at Worcester, be referred to the same Committee.

At quarter past twelve o'clock the Conference adjourned to meet at two o'clock, P. M.

Wednesday afternoon. The Conference assembled according to adjournment.

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rev. William C. Foster, and continued half an hour.

ESSAY.

The Rev. Mortimer Blake, of Taunton, read an Essay on The Supernatural an essential element in any religion capable of meeting the necessities of human nature.

A discussion followed, in which the following brethren participated: Rev. George Trask, of Fitchburg; Rev. Ebenezer Cutler, D. D., of Worcester; Rev. Horace James, of Boston; Rev. Abijah P. Marvin, of Winchendon; Rev. Seth Sweetser, D. D., of Worcester; Rev. James T. McCollom, of Medford; Rev. Daniel P. Noyes, Secretary of Home Evangelization; Rev. Albert H. Plumb, of Chelsea; Rev. James B. Miles, of Charlestown; and Rev. Edwin B. Webb, D. D., of Boston.

BUSINESS.

At half past four o'clock the Committee on County Assistants, through its Chairman, Rev. A. H. Plumb, of Chelsea, reported as follows:

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON COUNTY ASSISTANTS.

The Special Committee, to whom was referred the recommendation of the State Committee on Home Evangelization, respecting the appointment of County Assistants, beg leave to Report, that they have conferred together and with the State Secretary on the subject, and have unanimously agreed upon the following *Minute*, which they respectfully submit, viz:

In view of the feebleness of many of the churches in portions of the State, and of the importance of laying the foundations of churches in no small number of places now wholly destitute or but imperfectly supplied, and of the need of Christian labor in numerous out-districts and among the vast numbers of habitual neglecters of the sanctuary; and in view, also, of the recognized impossibility of meeting these imperious wants through the labors of pastors, already overburdened, and the necessity of special efforts to impress these facts, with the responsibilities growing out of them, upon the members of our churches,—this Conference recommends the appointment by the appropriate local bodies, of able and devoted men as *County Assistants*, to co-operate, temporarily, with the pastors and churches of such localities in prosecuting this work, and especially to awaken and direct the latent activities of the churches, with a view to the permanent occupation of every needy district, by the lay brethren of the churches adjacent; the support of the assistants to be drawn from the enlarged Home Missionary contributions such labors will be calculated to produce.

After remarks by Rev. Isaac P. Langworthy, of Chelsea, the Report was accepted and adopted.

TEMPERANCE.

The Committee on Temperance, through its Chairman, Rev. Samuel J. Spalding, D. D., of Newburyport, reported as follows:

That it is inexpedient for this body to send delegates to the Convention to be held at Worcester; but further state, that the Conference has heard with interest Dr. Chickering's statement as to the Temperance movement

carried on in conjunction with pastors and churches of different denominations, under the auspices of the Suffolk Union and the Massachusetts Temperance Society.

We recognize the indispensable importance of legal measures to suppress the traffic, and fully believe in the right and duty of society to protect itself by the removal of facilities and temptations against the great crime and curse, Intemperance.

We are also convinced, that for the reformation of the inebriate, and the preservation of the young, Bible truth, urged in a Christian spirit, must be our chief reliance.

While we rejoice in the usefulness of the various organizations for the suppression of intemperance, we are convinced that it is the duty of the Christian church to lead in the promotion of this cause, and are glad of the renewed attention given to it by our churches and ministers.

After remarks by Rev. George Trask, of Fitchburg; Rev. Edwin B. Webb, D. D., of Boston; and Rev. Abijah P. Marvin, of Winchendon, the Report was accepted and adopted.

The Committee on Nominations recommended the choice of the following brethren as delegates to other bodies, and they were appointed.

DELEGATES TO CORRESPONDING BODIES.

To the General Conference of Rhode Island:

Rev. John P. Cleveland, D. D., of Billerica.
Rev. George N. Nutting, of Marlboro.

To the General Conference of Maine:

Rev. Nahum Gale, D. D., of Lee.
Rev. Adoniram J. Rich, of Westminster.

To the General Association of New Hampshire:

Rev. John Colby, of Southboro.
Bro. William B. Hall, of Northampton.

To the General Convention of Ohio.

Rev. Alfred Emerson, of Fitchburg.
Prof. John Bascom, of Williamstown.

To the Congregational Union of Canada:

Bro. Joel Hayden, of Haydenville.
Rev. James P. Lane, of Andover.

To the General Association of Iowa:

Rev. David Bremner, of Plymouth.
Dea. William Hyde, of Ware.

To the General Association of Connecticut:

Dea. Joseph N. Bacon, of Newton.
Rev. Samuel J. Spalding, D. D., of Newburyport.

To the General Convention of Vermont:

Rev. Lyman White, of Phillipston.
Rev. Amos E. Lawrence, of Springfield.

To the General Conference of Missouri:

Rev. Asa Bullard, of Boston.
Rev. Albert H. Plumb, of Chelsea.

To the General Association of Illinois:

Rev. John F. Norton, of Wellesley.
Bro. C. C. Esty, of Framingham.

To the General Association of Michigan:

Rev. Erastus Maltby, of Taunton.
Rev. Horace Parker, of Ashby.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON FINANCE.

The Committee on Finance, through its Chairman, Dea. Stephen T. Farwell, reported as follows:

The Committee on Finance, to whom was referred the Treasurer's Report, have considered the same, and submit the following Report:

It appears from the Treasurer's account, that there was due him at the beginning of the year last past, the sum of $155 24, and that the expenses for the year have been $550 83, making a total of $706 07; that the receipts into the treasury from local Conferences have amounted to $565 50, leaving the treasury still in debt $138 57.

It also appears that three of the Local Conferences have paid nothing into the treasury during the year. One other Conference has paid but $20, which paid the previous year $64. If these had paid their proportion of the assessment voted by the last General Conference, the treasury to-day would have been out of debt. In order to raise the means to pay the expenses of the year ensuing, and relieve the treasury from debt, your Committee recommend the adoption of the following vote:

Voted, That the Treasurer be directed to notify the Scribes or Treasurers of the several Local Conferences, of the assessment upon each Conference of a sum equal to two dollars and fifty cents for each church, and to request those officers to collect the same immediately, and forward the amount to the Treasurer of the General Conference.

On motion of Rev. Edwin B. Webb, D. D., of Boston, it was

Voted, That the Report be amended by the substitution of an assessment of two dollars instead of two dollars and fifty cents, and the Treasurer be directed to notify the Scribes of the several Conferences.

The Report as thus amended was accepted and adopted.

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP.

The Committee on Promoting Christian Intimacy, through its Chairman, Rev. James P. Kimball, of Falmouth, reported as follows:

The Committee to whom was referred the question, *How can Christian acquaintance and brotherhood be promoted among the members of our churches*, would submit the following Report:

We are deeply impressed with the importance of doing more than has been done to knit the members of our churches together in the divine love. In many of these churches, especially the larger ones, there are those who are total strangers to each other, and scarcely anywhere is the intercourse of professing Christians so familiar as it should be in the case of those who are all members of one family—who are all brethren in Christ Jesus. But while it is easy to see and lament this lack, it is by no means as easy to find out and apply the remedy.

The subject demands for its proper presentation an *Essay*, rather than a brief and hasty report. We would however present to the Conference the following suggestions:

Christian acquaintance and brotherhood cannot be promoted without the *manifestation of deep and hearty love* among the members of our churches. There must be love for Christ and love for one another, or there can be no genuine religion, and this love must be *manifested*. While we do not believe there is less of true union of soul among the members of our churches, than there is among those of other names, we certainly are not so *demonstrative* as are some others. Now each Christian should see to it that he loves his brethren, and also that he is from day to day *showing* his love by his *words* and *acts*. If there be not this deep and hearty love *visible* among the members of Christ's household, they will be as strangers to each other. Anything that will develop and increase that love will accomplish the object that is sought; anything that tends to repress or conceal it, will weaken the tie that binds disciples together.

Keeping this in mind, we would have the personal intercourse and expression of interest accompanied by meetings *for the familiar study of the Bible*, either upon the Sabbath or during the week. Brethren who come together for such a purpose, will not only grow in Christian knowledge, but they will come very near to each other; their religious experience will be unfolded, and they will soon be deeply interested in each other's personal welfare.

The *weekly prayer meetings* should be a close bond of union to those who attend them, and those who are regularly in their places there do not often

complain that they are strangers to each other. But to these might also be added little *neighborhood prayer meetings*, held with the specific purpose of bringing the brethren near to each other; meetings where all formality is laid aside, and where criticism is not permitted to enter.

Nor is it necessary that the members of a church should come together only in the prayer meeting. *Social meeting* if it be accompanied by the love of Christ may greatly promote the prosperity of the church. There are those in every church to whom God has given abundance of means, and if from time to time they find pleasure in inviting their brethren, the rich and the poor alike, to share their hospitality, much may thus be done in causing all to love each other as brethren. Let these social gatherings be thoroughly Christian in their spirit, and let God be recognized as having his place in them, and they cannot fail to do a great amount of good.

We would suggest that there be at least an *annual reunion of the church as a body*, where all may meet together for the definite purpose of becoming acquainted with each other; where there shall be singing and prayer and conversation; where every member of the church shall feel that he is at home, and that he is surrounded with the members of the household of faith, one family in Christ Jesus.

We would add only one other suggestion, that the members of our churches be watchful in looking up those who are strangers among them, and making them feel at home. Let no one feel that he is uncared for, or that his place is anywhere else than in the family circle. We cannot doubt that if the members of our churches would make the effort to put in practice what we have thus imperfectly indicated, Christian acquaintance and brotherhood would be greatly promoted among them.

The Report was accepted and adopted.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATIONS.

On recommendation of the Nominating Committee, the Treasurer and Secretaries of the Conference were appointed a Committee on Publications, with instructions to publish according to their best judgment.

At six o'clock the Conference adjourned.

Wednesday evening. The Conference met in the Town Hall, and after spending a season in social and Christian fellowship, listened to brief addresses on the subject of Revivals by Rev. George R. Leavitt, of Lancaster; Rev. Nahum Gale, D. D., of Lee; Bro. Arthur Gilman of Lee; Rev. William C. Foster; Dr. C. H. Whitney; Rev. Mortimer Blake, of Taunton; and Rev. Horace Parker, of Ashby. After prayer by Rev. Nathaniel H. Eggleston, of Stockbridge, and the singing of the Doxology, the Conference adjourned to meet at half past eight o'clock, A. M., on Thursday.

THIRD DAY.

Thursday morning. At half past eight o'clock, the Conference was called to order by the Moderator. Rev. Nahum Gale, D. D., of Lee, conducted the devotional exercises, which were continued half an hour.

REPORTS OF DELEGATES TO CORRESPONDING BODIES.

A report was made by Rev. Joshua W. Wellman, of his visit as delegate to the General Conference of Missouri.

REPORTS OF DELEGATES FROM CORRESPONDING BODIES.

Reports were made by Rev. David G. Garland, from the General Conference of Maine; Rev. George Dustan, from the General Association of New Hampshire; Rev. Pliny H. White, from the General Convention of Vermont; Rev. Samuel R. Rosboro, from the General Conference of Missouri.

An appropriate reply to the Addresses of the Representatives from Corresponding Bodies was made by the Moderator.

The Narrative on the State of Religion, prepared by the Statistical Secretary, was read by Rev. Daniel P. Noyes, and was accepted and adopted.

Voted, That the paper be referred to the Committee on Publication.

ESSAY.

Rev. James B. Miles, of Charlestown, read an Essay on the subject, Prayer a Power.

A discussion followed in which the following brethren took part: Rev. John W. Chickering, D. D., of Boston; Bro. Nathan Fry, of Lowell; Dea. J. Russell Bradford, of Roxbury; Rev. Marshall B. Angier, of Sturbridge; Dea. Henry L. Barnes, of Medford; Rev. Henry J. Patrick, of West Newton; and Bro. John S. Andrews, of Taunton.

On motion of Rev. Alfred Emerson, it was

Voted, That the discussion be now closed.

GREETING TO THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES OF MISSOURI.

Rev. Alfred Emerson presented the following Resolution:

Resolved, That this Conference in view of the interest it feels in the Congregational churches of Missouri, that have by the grace of God come up out of great tribulation, and are now waging successfully a great battle

in doctrine and polity and opinion, sends to those churches a special "God speed," with the prayer that they may continue to be cheered by spiritual and moral successes.

After remarks by Rev. Isaac P. Langworthy, of Chelsea, and Rev. Horace James, of Boston, the Resolution was adopted.

On motion of Rev. Henry J. Patrick, it was

Resolved, That the Conference hereby express its gratitude to this church and people, and to the citizens of Fitchburg, for the generous and hearty manner in which they have received us; for the thoughtful hospitality of their homes; for the use of the Church and Town Hall, and for the aid of the choir in our evening sessions.

And especially would the Conference commend the Provisional Committee for their successful efforts in securing unusual facilities for reaching the meeting by reduced rates of fare on all the railroads, and would return thanks to the various Corporations for such reduction.

That this Conference present its thanks to the Moderator for the genial and considerate manner in which he has presided over our deliberations, and thereby has contributed to the harmony of our sessions.

Rev. Alfred Emerson and the Moderator responded to the foregoing Resolution.

The Minutes were read and approved.

The Conference then adjourned to meet at two o'clock for public worship and the observance of the Lord's Supper.

Thursday afternoon. At two o'clock the Conference assembled according to adjournment, when a sermon was preached by Rev. R. Crawford, D. D., of Deerfield; Text, 2 Cor. v. 14: "The love of Christ constraineth us." After the Sermon, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was celebrated, Rev. Samuel R. Rosboro, of Missouri, and Rev. Prof. H. Q. Butterfield, of Kansas, officiating. After which the Conference adjourned *sine die*.

E. K. ALDEN, *Moderator.*

DAVID BREMNER, *Scribe.*

A true copy of the Minutes.

Attest, JOSHUA W. WELLMAN,
Recording Secretary.

ESSAY.

BY REV. MORTIMER BLAKE, TAUNTON.

THE SUPERNATURAL AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN ANY RELIGION CAPABLE OF MEETING THE NECESSITIES OF HUMAN NATURE.

THE topic assigned for this Essay, as expressed by the Provisional Committee, assumes

1. That human nature has necessities which can be met only by some form of religion; and,

2. That these necessities of human nature indicate and define the elements of the religion capable of meeting them.

These two points are well taken, as I do not know that they are questioned, unless in the extent to which we might carry our specifications of man's moral necessities and of the elements of a religion equal to them.

But, in addition to these two points, the topic makes this affirmation, that the supernatural is an essential element in any religion capable of meeting the necessities of human nature. On this point, there will be qualifying definitions, limitations, and positive denials. The necessity of the supernatural in religion is a leading subject in dispute at the present time. It is the question about which the believers in the Gospel must once more meet its opponents in a probably final conflict. The subject now bears this aspect: A class of men, and some think an increasing class, who claim to be the advanced thinkers of the age, are insinuating or openly saying that we have passed beyond the Bible and the cross of Christ, beyond the former superstitious ideas of a direct supernatural agency in our moral history, and have come into a clarified morning, where reason can see its way by the steady lights of science and law, making the dim tapers of the past Christianity useless.

They say that the forces of the universe have all been resolved into physical law, and nature is sufficient for all our moral necessities. This class of writers do not directly deny and attack Christianity, but they assume that man needs no supernatural light or help. Nay, more; they assert that the Supreme Being, having organized his system of law, cannot interpose his special agency in the lock-stepped succession of effects. The supernatural is therefore impossible, and our Christianity is entirely incredible. Thus they step before the evidences of the Gospel and ignore its presence and consequence. They impudently bow the Creator out of his own realm with the coldest politeness, and lock the gate of his economy of things so tightly that the Redeemer has nothing to do but withdraw in silence, and leave

them to perish in the barrenness of their interior, inclosed supplies. While Christians have been directing their batteries against their own subdivisions, the unbelievers in Christianity have been quietly engineering their lines straight across the garden of the Lord, and now demand that the strong tower of his name be removed, as an obsolete and useless encumbrance within the recovered domain of science. In other words, the present unbelievers in Christianity are declaring that the increasing knowledge of science shows the theory of the supernatural in religion to be impossible, and are exhibiting a mere theism as sufficient for all man's moral necessities. This is the issue now made up for us. It is not to-day a question of the authenticity of manuscripts, nor of the credibility of witnesses. But it begins sooner than these, and disputes the need, and the possibility even, of any divine intervention at all. The claims of the Gospel as a special means of human salvation are denied a hearing, or are subjected by these self-constituted and pre-decided critics to rules which belong to an entirely different department of reasoning, and on premises that deny at the outset their possibility of existence.

The twenty minutes to which this Essay has been limited will not allow more than this brief statement of the question, and the fixing of a few outlining definitions and suggestions towards an argument.

The word "supernatural," which is the pivotal word of the subject, has significations which we do not accept.

1. We do not mean by it any kind of ghostly spiritism, which claims to open personal communication with invisible beings, whose pretended messages only show the senders to be of very meagre ideas and unreliable veracity.

2. We do not mean by supernatural any direct individual inspiration now indwelling in some favored ones, for their special guidance in duty. Nor

3. Do we mean by the word any such divine agency acting in men as reduces them to mere instruments, without volition or accountability in the resultant effect. Nor

4. Is the supernatural that which is contrary to or in violation of natural law. As this reduces the term to a simple relation to the present amount of our knowledge. But

5. The supernatural is, as the word signifies, whatever is outside of and above nature: meaning by nature the regular on-going of the fixed order of earthly things. There is a system of laws, or a regular order of causation going on in this world, which we call Nature, and which includes all the ordinary events of this world. Whatever events, if any, are the results of causes or of a system working outside of and upon this system, are on that account supernatural, and their producing causes are supernatural, and the whole system of which they are a part, if there be one so projecting into this sublunary system of nature, may be appropriately called supernatural.

But this Essay includes in the definition of supernatural these further special specifications, viz.: 1. A divine revelation to men of truth beyond the reach of the unaided human intellect: 2. The provision of an equitable

way of forgiveness for sin and of escape from its penalty: 3. The application of a divine influence upon men, sufficient to turn them from sin to holiness, and to keep them in the way of after-obedience, without infringing upon their personal freedom. Or, more briefly expressed, we mean by supernatural, the Bible, the atonement, and special grace, as these words are commonly understood and defined by evangelical Christians. We admit that these are in the highest sense supernatural — occurring, if they do occur, by no ordinary law of nature, but by the direct and extraordinary working of the Supreme Will. We deny, however, any impossibility or antecedent improbability of their existence. We deny this skeptical assumption against them, and should stand to this denial if the conditions of our subject led that way.

But the topic, as assigned to us, raises a different issue, viz.: that the supernatural in the sense just defined is not simply probable, but it is an essential element in any religion capable of meeting the necessities of human nature. Consequently, any religion which omits and rejects the supernatural revelation of truth and method of redemption and sanctification, confining its creed to what man can of himself learn and do towards his future, is fatally defective. This form of the question confines us to a single line of argument, to be drawn, not from metaphysical probabilities, or natural analogies in favor of the supernatural, but from its moral necessity to any religion sufficient for man.

This necessity may be argued,

I. From the moral condition of mankind by nature.

1. Man is naturally ignorant of the moral truths most important to him. This natural ignorance of man is not fully or truly exhibited in the present condition of society, because the true Light has lighted every man that cometh into the world. A religion claiming to be supernatural, has been for ages in the earth, and it is impossible, therefore, to distinguish exactly the actual extent of natural human ignorance or of a perfectly natural attainment, inasmuch as we cannot tell how far men are indebted to this divine revelation for their ideas. But the fact that the farther we go in distance or time from the centres of Christianity, the deeper and denser become the ignorance or errors of men, shows how great that darkness would now be, if the light in the world had always been darkness. It is evident that man, born without innate ideas to be a deposite or nucleus of knowledge, must be shut up to such conceptions as he can elaborate from his own life-experiences, or to such facts as he can shrewdly infer from the suggestions of others. His own unaided reason can climb only to the height of his own ladder of facts; from whose top the material world can give him but a dim suggestion of some out-lying existence beyond, and but a few ambiguous analogies touching its probable character. True, he can learn the eternal power and Godhead of the First Cause from the things that are seen, but he does not from them learn his fatherly sympathy and accessibleness. He can instinctively believe in his own immortality, but he does not know that his Redeemer liveth. For what end he should live, and whither is he finally going, are problems beyond his solution by any light of nature

which shines about him. His path ahead is into the untried and unknown darkness. All the light he has — the light of experience — shines only on his past which he has already traveled, so that every step forward, if unled, must be taken in uncertainty and dread. The painful cry of the heathen for light, and their discordant speculations in their darkness, show the necessity of man for an instruction in truth which he cannot discover. They show man's need of supernatural teaching, — even of a revelation of the divine will and human destiny and duty.

2. Man in his moral condition is a sinner against a law of right which his own conscience approves.

The universal consciousness is a sufficient witness to this fact. There is a weight of guilt upon every human soul more or less felt. It is a conviction, too, which reaches deeper than the fact of sin. It includes a sense of blameworthiness and an expectation of punishment for it. It is this consciousness which in every form of religion inserts some provision for placating some offended deity. Sin is the primary fact, and escape from its consequences the ultimate desideratum. Man feels that he needs some way of deliverance from sin, better than he can invent, and which he knows not where to find, — a way guaranteed to him by indisputable authority as sufficient and certain. His necessities as a sinner cry for some supernatural provision and assurance of forgiveness. He cries for an outside key to open a door of escape from condemnation which he cannot unfasten from within.

3. Man is under self-helpless bondage to his own moral perverseness.

He has not only broken through the protective sense of moral right within himself, but he has fallen down in the act and cannot raise himself up again. The choice which led him to sin continues to rule him and drives him ever farther on in his disobedience. So that, while his conscience approves the better things, his heart still follows the worse. Whenever men come to appreciate their moral status, this is the darkest and most helpless aspect of their condition, that they have voluntarily given themselves such a moral obliquity that they cannot now do the things they would. They have thrust their necks into a yoke from which they cannot extricate themselves. They have indulged their perverseness until it has grown stronger than their desires. So that the first natural cry of humanity is, like the sinking Peter's, "Lord, save, or I perish." If, then, man is to be recovered morally, and put in accord with a freed and approving conscience, some power above nature must reach out to re-instate him and create him anew unto good works. Our conclusion, then, is that the actual moral necessities of man — his ignorance, his self-conscious blameworthines, and his self-helplessness — demand a religion which has in it, and chiefly, the element of a supernatural revelation and a supernatural method of redemption and power of sanctification. Without these, neither his intellect, nor his conscience, nor his heart will be satisfied.

II. The necessity of the supernatural element in religion may be argued from the failure of the highest and best efforts of the unaided human intellect to form a satisfying one without it.

The race has always been experimenting in forms of religion. All the pagan beliefs and skeptical theories have been attempts to meet the necessities of human nature. But they, especially those of the mythological periods, bear indisputable testimony to at least two facts: the universally conscious need of, and perpetual reach after, the supernatural element as a necessity in religion; and the ignorant and debased devices of man in his natural state to meet that necessity. Even the highest and best efforts of the human mind have failed to find a sufficient religion.

It will be admitted that the Greeks had the best opportunity, as they certainly had a complete delight, to ascertain the utmost which the mere light of nature can teach of God and virtue and a future state. They had the acutest philosophers devoted to these inquiries, and they explored as far as a ray of light from nature shone and speculated beyond. But the utmost of their conclusions reached only to that altar, "To the unknown God." This was the utmost of their anxious thinking and acute reasoning. Paul truly put the fact to the Corinthians: "The world by wisdom knew not God." And when he came preaching a supernatural religion and a divine Redeemer, he most properly asked them, as if they well knew these speculations had been in vain, "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"

That is one of the most instructive incidents in the history of the human mind when Paul, the solitary, untitled, obscure Jew, came to Mars-hill, flanked with temples dedicated to every imaginable deity, and its seats filled with sages grown white-haired in earnestly discussing their great questions before the still unsatisfied people, — came preaching Jesus and the resurrection, and they declared him to be a "setter forth of strange gods!" With all the conclusions of the past, and all their own inquiries, Jesus was still a stranger to them. Their utmost had not reached to this first fact of the Gospel. In Athens, "the eye of Greece," and the then centre of the light of reason, nature and the supernatural were then brought face to face, and the great question of the ages was answered to the Gentiles, and with ever growing gain to the side of God from them who have found no satisfaction in nature.

III. The necessity of the supernatural element may be argued from the real rest and calm which the believer in it does find in Christ. But this argument is omitted.

Finally, the experiment of finding the way to heaven without supernatural light and help has been on trial for hundreds of years, and under the best conditions. God at the first kept hid the lamp of life, dimly lighting it behind the mountains of Palestine, and glassing it about with the semi-opaque shades of the Hebrew rites, through which it faintly glimmered like a dull burner within a poor lantern, so that the world might have the unillumined night to find their way in; and those star-gazing Magi and speculating Greeks were not obtuse observers, nor unambitious students,— but they failed to strike upon the path of life. The wise men of the East

had to come to the Child of Bethlehem. The grave Sanhedrim had to ask questions of the Young Man of Nazareth. The Sages of Mars-hill had to ask Paul to hear him again of this matter. And if those truly earnest minds of antiquity could not find a satisfying religion by the light of nature, what can modern speculators do more, who begin with putting out the Light of the world?

ESSAY.

BY REV. JAMES B. MILES, OF CHARLESTOWN.

PRAYER A POWER.

By appointment, my subject is "Prayer a Power." But in the strictest sense, prayer is the instrument, or medium of power, rather than power itself. It sustains a relation to power like that existing between the engine and the steam; like that which the battery and the wires hold to electricity; like that which the conduit sustains to the waters of the lake or stream. As the conduit conveys the limpid waters down upon the parched meadows and plains, causing them to teem with life, and to blossom with beauty, or distributes them through the thronged city, causing health and refreshing to gush in ten thousand dwellings; even so, through prayer, as a channel, streams of divine grace flow down upon moral wastes and deserts, under whose influence they rejoice and blossom as the rose, yea blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing; even so, through prayer, as a channel, to souls dying of spiritual thirst are conveyed the waters of everlasting life. By a figure of speech we call the powerless engine, powerful, meaning thereby, that it is so ingeniously contrived, and so skillfully constructed as to appropriate a mighty force, and direct it to beneficent ends, making it, in ten thousand ways, alleviate our toil, lighten and lift our burdens, and add to the conveniences, comforts, and embellishments of our life. The powerful battery is called such simply with reference to its fitness as an instrument through which the lightning does man's bidding, and darts his messages over continents and under oceans to the ends of the earth. Even thus is prayer powerful as the divinely prepared instrument, which appropriates the energies of the Almighty, and directs them to the sublimest ends, turning them to the accomplishment of the most beneficent spiritual results.

In regard to this subject, the first of all essentials is, the unwavering, practical conviction that prayer *is* this divinely fitted and ordained instrument for appropriating the forces of Omnipotence, and applying them for the conquest of sin, the removal of evil, and the establishment of righteousness in the individual soul, and the world over.

Fundamental to the whole subject is a living faith in the statement, *Prayer availeth much*. The skepticism which, among the learned, and the

unlearned, finds language, when expressed at all, in the question, What profit shall we have if we pray unto Him? is utterly without ground; utterly without excuse. To say that prayer is not opposed to nature and right reason, is to speak tamely, and utter less than half the truth. Prayer is in charming accord with nature. It is in delightful harmony with the unperverted instincts of the human soul. It is a demand of nature and reason. Were it not for the derangement and confusion wrought by sin, every intelligent human being, with eyes upturned to heaven, would utter, "Abba, Father." Prayer is the natural, the spontaneous, the proper recognition of the relation in which the creature stands to the Creator; of human dependence to Omnipotence; of weakness to All Strength; of the finite to the Infinite.

"True hearts spread and heave unto their God, as flowers do to the sun."

Prayer is "God's breath in man returning to his birth." Even false hearts, in emergencies, testify that prayer is a demand of nature. Let the professed atheist, Hume himself, be suddenly confronted by death, and he declares there is a God, and prays to him. In their distress they will cry unto the Lord. Naturalists and rationalists, so called, will scout the idea, but for all that, it is true, that in every system of naturalism which is comprehensive of the whole of nature; in every system of rationalism, which is founded in right reason, prayer necessarily finds and fills an important place. Are the propositions, prayerfulness is philosophical; prayerlessness is unphilosophical, in opposition to the teachings of the current philosophy? We know they are. And yet, they are true. Pure devotion is the highest, is perfect philosophy. The prayerful alone are in harmony with nature and meet the demands of reason.

Moreover, the prayerful alone are in harmony with the divine perfections. The favorite method for attempting to show the uselessness of prayer, and to cast contempt upon it, is to assert its incongruity with the attributes of Deity, to declare that it lies under their condemnation; whereas, it is exactly congruous with them, and it wears the bright seal of their approval. The allegation of its conflict with Omniscience, cannot be maintained. On the contrary, it is easily shown to be the fitting acknowledgment, on the part of the creature, of the Creator's perfect knowledge of him, and his needs. It is rendering to Omniscience its due tribute of reverence. It is, also, the exercise by which divine goodness is properly recognized and honored. Is it said, God is infinitely good, and hence, will supply our wants without being petitioned to do it? He is infinitely good. But, turn to almost any page of his Bible, and there stands the expression of his will, that men pray everywhere, for all things, and without ceasing. Is obedience to his will a slight upon his goodness? He is infinitely good. But how more admirably does he display his goodness and condescension, than by admitting men, creatures of a day, to his very presence-chamber, and permitting them to tell him their thoughts; to speak to him of their interests, their anxieties and fears, their cares and sorrows, familiarly and freely, as a man converses with his brother.

Disbelief in the efficacy of prayer, avowed by one multitude, and secretly

lurking in the hearts of another, and we fear, a still greater multitude, originates in a misconception, or a willful misrepresentation of the relation of prayer to the divine immutability. By how many, both philosophers of great pretensions, and people who make no claim to superior wisdom and learning, is the fact, that God governs the Universe according to a fixed plan of his own, deemed a conclusive proof of the folly, yea, the presumption of prayer. To overturn and sweep away all arguments for prayer, to destroy all faith in it, how many think it enough to pronounce the words "divine decree," or to quote from the Catechism, "God has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass." These persons, from a true premise, draw a false conclusion. We are with the opponents of prayer in affirming the immutability of God, in maintaining that he has decreed all things. With them we say, He governs the world according to his own fixed plan. But instead of going on with them to draw the inference, 'therefore, prayer is useless, therefore, prayer is presumption,' we go in the opposite direction, and say, 'therefore, prayer is efficacious, therefore, prayer is reverence.' They make the divine decree an insuperable obstacle to the prevalence of prayer, while, in truth, it is the pledge and guaranty that prayer will be answered. For, let it be understood; in the great and unchanging plan of the divine government, prayer is included. We must not suppose the Supreme Ruler, in ordaining and instituting his government, took no account of prayer. This was no afterthought. On the contrary, prayer entered into his plan, as an original and essential principle. In answering prayer, his government is neither suspended, nor turned aside from its legitimate ends. Answers to prayer do not, as is flippantly asserted by the opponents of prayer, and as is admitted in many of the defenses of prayer, imply an accommodation of the divine purposes to the wishes of fallible men; but rather, the legitimate execution of those purposes. The doctrine of prayer is not obnoxious to the charge, which Professor Tyndall expresses in sonorous phrase. It does hot, like the superstitious homage paid by the Tyrolese peasants to the Virgin Mary, "assume that nature, instead of flowing ever onward in the uninterrupted rhythm of cause and effect, is mediately ruled by the free human will." For prayer comes in as an essential part of this uninterrupted rhythm of cause and effect. The divine plans and purposes and decrees are formed with reference to the prayers of men. Although God sees the end from the beginning, and his plan secures the certainty of whatever transpires, yet, we never conceive of him worthily, and truly, except when he stands disclosed to our faith, as a living, present Deity, at this moment forming his purposes in view of our prayers. The divine decree does, indeed, make sure the accomplishment of all results. But it does not insure a single result without the use of appropriate means. An eternal, irreversible decree makes it certain that while the earth remains, harvest shall not cease. But who expects to gather a harvest without ploughing and sowing and the use of other appropriate means. The divine purposes respect one's education, the occupation he is to follow, and the position he is to fill. But who expects to become learned without discipline and study, or to occupy posts of honor

without taking steps to reach them. Passing now to spiritual things, an eternal, irreversible decree has made sure spiritual harvests, the copious effusions of the Holy Spirit, the conversion of souls, the fulfillment of the glorious promise that "Israel shall bud and blossom and fill the earth." But, except in answer to prayer, not one of these results will be accomplished. Prayer is the condition upon which these blessings depend, the mean necessary for these ends. When in answer to prayer, God converts a sinner, sanctifies a saint, or grants any blessing whatsoever, he no more accommodates his government to us, he no more changes his purposes, than when he gives to our toil and faithful culture of the ground a harvest, or soundness and strength to our obedience of the laws of health. The divine decree does, indeed, respect all things. Then, certainly, it respects our prayers. And if the purpose relating to prayer, the cause, fails, then the answer, the effect, fails. If the purpose respecting prayer, the cause, is accomplished, then the answer, the effect, follows. By praying, we prove our prayers to have been decreed, and make sure the results conditioned upon them. Viewed in its relation to the *divine perfections*, therefore, prayer is seen to be the fit instrument for appropriating the energies of Omnipotence.

We must now add, viewed in its relation to *human imperfections*, to human weakness, ignorance, sinfulness, it wears the same glorious aspect. For, true prayer is the exercise of those only who are believers in Christ, of those in whom Christ dwells, and who dwell in Christ; of those whose imperfections are covered by the perfections of Jesus; whose sinfulness is covered by his perfect righteousness. This idea of union with Christ underlies all the teachings of the Scriptures on this subject. In variety of phrase, but sameness of thought, how often are we exhorted to pray always, and not to faint, to pray as sinners who need pardon, as children who are sure to be heard, to believe that we receive whatsoever things we ask for. But all these exhortations are based upon the declaration of Christ, "No man cometh unto the Father *but by me*. If ye shall ask anything *in my name* I will do it." In short, we may say, "Believers are in Christ Jesus, and therefore, they come to God by him. The whole character of worship and prayer is derived from the consciousness, that through him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father. God is approached as a Father, indeed, because he is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in whom the worshiper is found; and therefore the two names are united in every voice and almost in every mention of prayer. We have boldness to come into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. Sacrifice has been offered, the barriers are gone. A new and living way is opened. Furthermore, this access, which is through the Son, is, also, by one Spirit. To those who are in Christ the Holy Ghost is given, as the consequence of their union with him, and thus there is the divine presence in the soul of the worshiper; and so in the highest and most perfect sense he worships the Father in spirit and in truth, and prays in the Holy Ghost, 'the Spirit itself helping his infirmities when he knows not what he should pray for as he ought, and making intercession for him with groanings which cannot be

uttered.' Passing into the midst of such discoveries as these, we feel that the doctrine of prayer has attained its perfect form, by combination with the doctrine of the Trinity, and that the highest fulfillment of all which had been enjoined upon those who were *with* Jesus has become possible for those who now are *in* him.

Not to confine our thoughts longer to the precise point, Prayer, the fit, divine instrument or medium of power; we advance a step further and higher, to a consideration of prayer as the instrument of a *beneficent, mighty* power, a power commensurate with human necessities, a power as unlimited as that of Deity. Power is either admirable or dreadful according to the ends which it is made to subserve, as it is exerted to bless or to curse; to save or to destroy. The ocean lashed into fury by the storm; the tornado whose might neither giant trees, nor the proudest works of man can withstand; the earthquake suddenly swallowing up whole towns and cities; the despot at the head of great armies, striding forth for conquest, devastation and destruction, filling the nations with trembling and terror — power in these ways exhibited is dreadful, is terrific. But, power as it is seen in the breezes that waft the commerce of the world; as seen in the adjustment and movements of the bodies in our solar system, securing the beneficent alternations of summer and winter, day and night; as seen in the gentle sunbeam, that, without noise or show, lifts to the airy regions the enormous weight represented by all the waters that descend in the rains, gush from the fountains, flow in the rivers, the Amazon, the Mississippi, the Niagara, all the rivers of the world, great and small, — the gentle sunbeam to whose mysterious influence, science teaches us, is to be traced every motion on the globe, and without which all nature, now full of life and beauty, would become silent, motionless and dead; power as seen in that infinitely high manifestation, the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, health to the sick, liberty to those in bonds, life to the dead, heaven to those doomed to perdition, as seen in the transformation of Saul of Tarsus, the furious persecutor of the church, into Paul the Apostle, counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ; power as seen in the achievements of Him, who is "*mighty to save*" — how admirable, how sublime it is! Now the power of which prayer is the instrument is ever, and in all cases, power *to bless, to exalt, and to save.* It is not force acting indiscriminately and blindly. In all instances, it is might wielded and directed by *Intelligent Love.* If, as it must often be, the end indicated by the prayer is not good, or if good, not the best, then the power is granted, but it is not exerted for that particular end. But, because He who hears prayer is Wisdom and Love, the power appropriated by prayer is always directed to ends the wisest and the best, is always made to ennoble, to bless, and to save. If the end indicated is the removal of the thorn in the flesh, power is surely granted, not for that specific end, but, for one better than that, the acquisition of grace to turn the affliction into the means of spiritual advancement and nobility. If the prayer is that of a mother for the life of an only child in peril on the ocean, or the battle-field, the power is sure to

come, perhaps not in the preservation of the life, but in the unspeakably more blessed form, the preparation of that precious one for a world where "Soldiers war no more," for a home in which "They cannot die any more, but are equal unto the angels."

And as for the *measure* of the power secured by prayer — in what terms shall we speak of that? When we approach this point language seems utterly inadequate. Already we have characterized the power as mighty, as commensurate with human necessities. And, verily, such it is. The duties and labors imposed upon us, the self-denials and sacrifices demanded of us as soldiers of the cross — do these represent a great power? Yet the power appropriated by prayer surpasses that. It invigorates with the strength of Christ, even to the extent of enabling one *to do all things*. The sorrows, afflictions, trials of humanity—how great is the sum of them! With what a mighty force are they endowed! How they come crashing down upon us, defeating our plans, disappointing our hopes! But the power of which prayer lays hold, has a force superior to theirs, bringing into the soul, whatever may be its maladies and wounds, comfort and healing, the support and peace of God. Temptations, in all the variety of form in which they assail us, the opposition we encounter as the servants of Christ, in the atheism, the infidelity, in all the systems of false religion and irreligion, in the abounding worldliness, in all the agencies which the Adversary is employing against the church for the mastery of the world — how fearfully potent they are! Their energy is denoted, not by flesh and blood, but by principalities and powers; by the rulers of the darkness of this world; by the spirits of wickedness in high places. But more potent than these all, is the energy gained by prayer. It clothes the disciples of Christ in the whole armor of God. It inspires them with a courage and strength by which they overthrow all their enemies, and stand forth *triumphant victors*. Death — its power, how great, how formidable it is! Death is the King of terrors. Through fear of it, multitudes are all their life time subject to bondage. Says the accomplished French divine, James Saurin, "To know what death is without being terrified at it is the highest degree of perfection attainable by the human mind; it is the highest point of felicity which a man can reach while in this valley of tears." But prayer is the instrument of a power mightier than that of this terror-king; a power which is the death of death, which enables one with a countenance beaming with the glory of heaven, to pass up through the pearly gates into the celestial city, shouting "Oh death, where is thy sting? Oh grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Duty, trial, temptation, death — let their separate forces be combined into one mighty power, yet the power appropriated by prayer surpasses that. It is even the power of that

> "Great arm which spans the east and west,
> And tacks the centre to the sphere."

It is hardly an exaggeration to say, "It changes impotence to omnipotence; for commanding the resources of Divinity, there is nothing it

cannot do, and there is nothing it need want." The devout George Herbert quaintly, but how forcibly terms it,

> "The churches' banquet, angels' age;
> The Christian plummet, sounding heaven and earth;
> Engine against the Almighty; sinner's tower;
> Reversed thunder; Christ's side piercing spear;
> The six days world transposing in an hour;
> A kind of tune which all things hear and fear;
> Softness, and peace, and joy, and love, and bliss;
> Exalted manna; gladness of the best;
> Heaven in ordinary; man well drest;
> The milky-way; the bird of paradise;
> Church bells beyond the stars heard; the soul's blood;
> The land of spices; something understood."

With all our hearts we adopt his fervid words, and say,

> "Since these three wait on thy throne,
> Ease, Power, and Love; I value Prayer so,
> That were I to leave all but one,
> Wealth, fame, endowments, virtues, all should go;
> I and dear Prayer would together dwell,
> And quickly gain for each inch lost, an ell."

Brethren and Friends, Pastors and Messengers of the Churches of our beloved Commonwealth: It is good for us to be here for conference in regard to the extension of the kingdom of Him whom our souls love. Around us in this goodly town are the tokens of thrift, enterprise and growth. The sounds that here fall upon our ears, the sights that here greet our eyes are indicative of life, advancement, untiring activity. From these eminences of grandeur near by, we look down and around upon some of the most admirable of the great Creator's handiwork. A wonderful beauty overspreads these hills and valleys. No inferior glory beams from these skies. In combinations of surpassing richness and splendor blend the colors in a sunrise or sunset here. These breezes waft to us the sweet perfume of fruits and flowers. But for other and higher reasons than these, it is good for us to be here. For recently God has made this spot glorious by the displays of his grace which brings salvation. More admirable than this material handiwork of his, is the work of quickening and renewal, which he has wrought in many immortal souls here. A diviner beauty, a more transcendent glory than that which is shed over these landscapes, is the beauty of the Lord our God that has rested down upon this Zion, and the glory shed over it by the rising of the Sun of Righteousness. Sweeter than the perfume of flowers is the fragrancy of the name of Jesus, like ointment poured forth, with which the atmosphere of this place is redolent. Gathered here, so nearly at the beginning of the season for renewed activity in our Master's cause, may we drink deeply of the *revival* spirit, the spirit of Jesus. During our tarry here, may we be endued with power from on High, even that *plenitude* of life and energy, which is sure to come, and which will come *only in answer to prayer*. Let the proofs

God has given the past year of his readiness to answer prayer, to be found in the precious revivals of religion vouchsafed to so many of our churches, strengthen our faith and love. Let them inspire us with new enthusiasm in the service of our great Leader. Guarding ourselves against the error of supposing prayer and Christian activity are separable, an error than which scarcely any one can be more offensive to God or fatal to success; let us hear anew the word, "The working prayer of a righteous man availeth much." "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." And then let us go forth prepared to offer *working* prayer. Let our petitions for revivals of religion, for the enlargement of our churches, be accompanied with *obedience to those words of Christ upon which these blessings depend.* Cherishing no such view of the promised time for the ultimate and complete triumph of the Redeemer's kingdom as amounts to fatalism, but heeding the exhortation, "Looking for and *hasting* the coming of the day of God," let us be confident of the willingness of our God to repeat, in these days, Pentecostal seasons, even to rend the heavens, and pour down abundant blessings. Thus, Brethren, shall we labor and pray under the stimulus of the conviction, that according as we and the disciples of Christ are faithful or unfaithful, will advance rapidly, or with tardy steps, the kingdom of the Redeemer; will come soon, or, after long delay, that promised hour in which the tribes of earth in concert with the millions in heaven, will join in the exclamation, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ."

SECOND ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

STATE COMMITTEE ON HOME EVANGELIZATION.

THE State Committee on Home Evangelization, in presenting their Second Annual Report, recognize with gratitude to God, the many encouragements of the past year. From pastors and churches, in all parts of the Commonwealth, expressions of interest and approval have been continually received; and the blessing of Heaven has been granted, though not always in the form anticipated, yet in such measure as to call forth the tenderest thanksgiving and to awaken a devout confidence. We feel that the churches are advancing upon paths divinely appointed, leading to sure and abiding prosperity.

The Massachusetts Home Missionary Society has bestowed its welcome support, in compliance with the suggestions of the Conference; and its officers have shown a cordial interest in the progress of the work.

The State Secretary has continued his labors under the Committee's direction; preaching, addressing Conferences and Conventions, and endeavoring, by correspondence and personal interviews with pastors and members of churches to promote a development of the strength of the churches in both associate and individual action.

More than fifty "Christian Conventions," modeled upon one that was called by Boston clergymen at the suggestion of the Young Men's Christian Association, were held during the winter and early spring, with excellent effect. They developed a sense of Christian unity and a spirit of activity, and gave a valuable impulse to the Home Evangelization work.

In accordance with the vote of the last Conference, allowing the enlargement of the Committee, by the election of persons interested in the cause, twelve additional members have been chosen, whose names are given in the Appendix to this Report.

The following "*Statement*" was adopted by the Conference of 1866:

1. It is the duty of the churches to cover the entire area of the State with a permanent, methodical, Christian inspection and care; to which end,—

2. It is important that every church, as was recommended by the last General Conference, define its territorial parish; taking the term as designating the district within which, either solely, or jointly with neighbor churches, it holds itself accountable to use its best endeavors, in behalf not only of all persons connected with its own congregation, but also all who are connected with none.

3. The churches should find a way, by means of Branch Sunday Schools, Neighborhood Meetings, Christian Visitation, or otherwise, to reach all outdistricts, so that there shall be no neglected places in Massachusetts.

4. It is of vital importance to the success of the churches in their local work, that pastors more generally institute arrangements for the thorough training of persons for the office of teachers in the Sunday School, and also for the more responsible office of *Lay-Helpers* in the work of evangelization.

The reports from the churches do not show with accuracy how far these suggestions have been complied with; but they indicate important progress towards realizing the aims of the first and the second; while it is very manifest that large advances have been made in the forms of effort commended in the third. Respecting the fourth, no returns have been received.

Intelligence from other parts of the country, shows that the Home Evangelization movement has taken a start in almost every State containing Congregational churches. We have reason to believe, that if it is pushed with zeal and wisdom here at the East, a few years will witness an important and permanent increase in the efficiency of Puritan churches, at least throughout our own continent, and probably in all parts of the world.

The *statistical returns* are scanty and imperfect; but not more so than was to be expected, when all the circumstances are taken into account. It is always difficult to secure careful returns, even of single items of information, that the churches have not been accustomed to make. Even the simple reports requested by the General Association, at the time of its organization, were very imperfectly and inaccurately given, for years. Much more difficulty was, of course, to be apprehended, from those requiring a careful investigation of parishes. Then, again, the present effort has been embarrassed by the number of applications made by the General Association and the General Conference, with the Local Conferences and Associations. It is to be hoped that the churches and pastors may find it practicable to unite upon *one* comprehensive and luminous system of returns, that shall answer all demands, local and general. While the *doing of the work* is the main thing, an accurate, adequate and intelligent report of the work done is a matter of universal and permanent value. Other ages and distant countries will thank us for a full and clear record.

The plans adopted by this Committee, and formally approved by the General Conference and by nearly every Local Conference, contemplate a yearly report to every Local Conference, by its Committee on Home Evangelization; from which reports, supplemented by personal communications, the State Committee is to prepare its annual return for the General Conference. Of the twenty-three Conferences now in existence, at least twenty have appointed Committees. Most of these Committees have brought the subject before their respective Conferences, and have furnished to the State Committee returns, more or less complete, of the progress of the work. But in almost all the Conferences there is room for improvement in this respect. It would ordinarily be possible to prepare reports of more elaborate character, than most of those made during the past year, presenting summaries of the work of the churches, more thorough, instructive and stimulating. When we remember, that no events are so important as those which these reports should record, no interests so momentous, even for the present life, as those which they should discuss and promote, and no inquiries concerning principles or methods, of such delicacy,

solemnity or difficulty, we cannot fail to be impressed with the value of the admirable opportunity which the Committees on Home Evangelization are invited to improve. Let us have from these Committees yearly *statements of the facts*, so methodical and luminous, that the most careless hearer shall catch their meaning; and let us have, year after year, in our Conferences of Churches, not a dull treading over of old ground, but progressive discussions of important topics, brought to view by these facts; let us unitedly study these great things of the kingdom of God, with prayer and also with thanksgiving, in the confidence that thus our love shall "abound yet more and more in knowledge and all judgment."

Does it not, also, seem to be of great consequence, that every Conference should yearly put to itself the questions implied in the recommendations of last year's "Statement:"—and ascertain, Whether the churches are covering the whole ground? Whether every church is distinctly accepting and fulfilling its separate responsibility? Whether, thus, all out-districts are regularly and effectively reached? And whether successful measures are taken to train the most capable and devoted church members for their precious and necessary calling as *Helpers* in the work of the Lord and of his Church? If to these, were added inquiries respecting the different *classes of neglecters*, — the whole work of the churches would come under profitable review.

Our limited space permits us to present only PARTIAL RETURNS FROM THE CONFERENCES.

BERKSHIRE COUNTY.

BERKSHIRE NORTH. No Conference has been formed in this part of the county. Six towns are without Congregational churches. In some the neglect is very sad. Twelve out-districts are reported, but this number is doubtless too small. Eight are cared for by Congregational churches; two by Methodists, though hitherto, by the Congregationalists. A very interesting work is reported from the Vermont border, where a chapel has been built in a district long neglected, and regular services and a Sunday school are now maintained. Prosperous schools are also at work in other places. The young men of North Adams are moving with renewed zeal.

BERKSHIRE SOUTH. This is one of the two Conferences, to which the Secretary was expected to devote special attention. The storms of winter entirely prevented the usual meetings of the Conference, and expected labors of the Secretary; but the efforts of the churches were blessed, and a beginning of much promise has been made.

In *Alford*, where eighty years ago the Congregational church was broken up by Shays' rebellion, and where for generations the institutions of religion have been very feeble, and the house of Christ divided against itself, a union has, at last, been effected, and there are hopes of better times.

In *Mount Washington*, a small township in the south-westernmost corner of the State, whose inhabitants are almost all found in a single hollow upon the mountain, and where, hitherto, there has never been a house set apart to Divine worship, a faithful minister, a resident of a neighboring town, has been preaching, and has secured assistance for the erection of a chapel,

upon which the people are now at work. It is hoped that the days of such complete destitution are forever ended.

The church at Lenox, aided by brethren from Lee, have hired a hall (once used for dancing) at *Lenox Furnace*, and are successfully maintaining meetings for the benefit of those of its parishioners who are engaged in the iron works.

The church in Stockbridge sustains a prosperous Branch Sunday school and Neighborhood meeting at *Glendale*, a manufacturing village within the bounds of its parish; it also keeps up a Neighborhood meeting at *South Lee*, a village properly included in its parish, though not in the same town, and another meeting in a corner of Barrington, known as *Beartown*, and cut off by mountains from the church in that town, and also a Sunday afternoon meeting in still another district similarly situated—*Muddy Brook*.

The church in Lee has been greatly blessed. Providentially led to engage in efforts for the spiritual welfare of the eastern part of the town, (*East Lee*,) it was not only rewarded with success there, in gathering a large Sabbath school, and good congregations on Sunday afternoons and week day evenings, but also in numerous conversions. The Sabbath school numbers 125 members,—hopeful conversions, 42. And moreover, these efforts in behalf of others, returned to bless its own church-going households. It has enjoyed one of the most remarkable revivals known in its whole history; and at the present moment nearly all the young people of its congregation give hopeful evidence of spiritual renewal. A prayer meeting has also been established in a neighborhood still more remote, and the church is aiding in sustaining services at Lenox Furnace.

The church in South Egremont has within the bounds of its parish as at present recognized, only a single district requiring local efforts. Within this, it is maintaining a Branch Sunday school, which is large and flourishing. During the fall and winter, Neighborhood prayer meetings were also held in the two school houses.

Energetic efforts are made in other churches of this Conference, to reach the border districts; and, on the whole, in view of the progress of the past year, we have reason to thank God and take courage. Nine of the eighteen out-districts are now statedly reached by some form of Christian labor.

Upon a survey of the entire ground covered by the Conference — and much more when we comprehend the whole county — we are impressed with the magnitude of the work remaining to be done. One of its largest townships is reported as "made up of out-districts." Another is in nearly the same condition. In another, a majority of the inhabitants must be counted neglecters; while in a fourth, denominational differences create a hurtful division. The roughness of the mountain roads and the frequent severity of the winters offer serious hindrances to regular attendance upon church. The same obstacles have also interfered with the prosperity of the schools, and with that intercourse which is indispensable to the most rapid progress. The mountain regions are continually drained of a large part of their most enterprising population; the furnaces buy up the farms, for the sake of their wood, and having "skinned them,"— in the expressive

language of the region — sell them out at low prices to foreigners, who are thus, in a number of places, coming into possession of hundreds of these mountain acres. This transfer of population, while apparently beneficial both to those who go and those who come, throws new burthens on the churches, and adds new embarrassments to the already difficult problem of a general popular Christianization. Considerable numbers of the Canadian French are now coming into Berkshire, turning its forests into fuel for the mills and foundries. Many of the churches are feeble; in many towns the believers are divided among denominations that have not yet learned to be one; and in almost all, the pastorates have for more than a generation been so short, that no system of operations could be steadily pursued, and the churches have not only failed to keep up with the growing demand for effort, but can hardly be said to have a due sense of their responsibility, or of the ways in which it must be met. Encouraging as are the tokens of the past year, they call for more earnest labors, for more comprehensive plans, and for a more determined resolve. It is indeed impossible to understand how, with the utmost fidelity that we can expect, the Berkshire churches can take suitable measures in behalf of the numerous districts and classes of neglecters, without some addition to the number of laborers. Many of the churches have more than they can do, to occupy their appropriate parishes. The pastors are so burthened with work, that they cannot look after the remote districts in an effective manner. A minister who should act under the direction of the Berkshire and Columbia Missionary Society as a *County Assistant*, would have his hands overflowing with labor. It is believed that provision could be made for the support of such a helper to the churches, by special contributions.

FRANKLIN COUNTY.

The Committee of the Franklin Conference report serious embarrassments to the work of Home Evangelization, arising from changes in the pastoral office. "There have been almost *forty* changes," say they, "within four years. Within that period every church, save four or five, has parted with a minister, and some have changed twice or even three times." "Then, again, we are scattered over a wide territory, and do not get together so often as is desirable; and quite a number of our parishes are off by themselves, and hardly feel the contact of more favored and more stirring churches." "It is a slow work." "We ought to have our moral statistics on our tongues' end. Every pastor ought to be so familiar with these *most vital* statistics, in regard to his church, Sunday school and parish, as to be able to sit down in his study, and make out reliable returns in two or three hours." But it is far from being so now.

Of the twenty-four out-districts at present within the proper responsibility of the Congregational churches, at least eight are now cared for by them. Other denominations have entered upon four or five. Many, therefore, remain without any stated Christian labors. Three towns in the county have no Congregational church; and two, it is understood, have no evangelical church in active operation. Many of the churches are feeble.

The brethren of the County, impressed with this wide spread destitution and neglect, and burthened with multiplied labors, have been looking, during nearly the whole of the past year, for a County Assistant. They have at last succeeded in securing the services of Rev. W. C. Foster, whose efforts have been so much blessed to the churches of Hampden County, and who entered upon his labors in his new field upon the first of the present month.

The church at Sunderland has joined with others near by in holding Neighborhood Conferences, which have been seasons of much interest and profit.

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY.

Hampshire Conference. It is not known that any Standing Committee on Home Evangelization has here been appointed. By correspondence and other means, some returns have been secured, showing that in at least four out-districts stated efforts are put forth in behalf of the people.

Hampshire East Conference. Thirteen out-districts are reported from this part of the County. Of these, seven appeared to be reached with some form of stated Christian labor. (For statistics, see Appendix.)

The towns in the north eastern part of Hampshire, with those in the south eastern portion of Franklin, and others in the western border of Worcester County, present some of the most embarrassing questions which the churches have to meet. Their surface is rough; their soil rocky and generally barren; their young men are continually seeking more attractive homes; the churches are often poor and of feeble courage; and a considerable number of border districts are but very ineffectually reached by Christian influences. There can be no question, that *somebody is responsible* for carrying the Gospel to this people, and that somebody is at fault for doing it feebly. If the churches in these towns are really coming up to the full measure of their ability, then the question falls upon stronger churches in the neighborhood and upon the Conferences; possibly also upon the General Conference and upon the Home Missionary Society, whether some part of their appropriate work is not remaining undone. The ministers and churches of Hampshire County could, apparently, find abundant work for a faithful "Assistant."

HAMPDEN COUNTY.

We have received from Rev. JOHN W. HARDING, the Chairman of the Committee on Home Evangelization in the Hampden Conference, the following Report:

HOME EVANGELIZATION IN HAMPDEN COUNTY.

So established are our convictions of the importance of Home Evangelization, that it has become a standing topic at the Annual Meeting of Hampden County Conference. The forenoon of the third day is given chiefly to a discussion of the methods and results of our Home work; and the other topics usually have such a bearing on this as to make the interest of the whole meeting converge towards it as the central theme.

OUR EXPERIMENTS.

We have tried several experiments, learning something valuable from each.

1. *Mutual Visitation of Churches.* For several years we pursued a system of visitation, by which, according to regular appointments made at the Annual Conference, the churches throughout the County should visit each other by an itineracy of pastors and delegates, holding Conferences with each church for a single day. This was productive of much good in promoting Christian fellowship, bringing the stronger churches into more intimate relations of friendship and support to the weaker. The system was relinquished, to the regret of probably the majority of our most earnest brethren, because of the friction occasioned by the indifference and carelessness of a few, which created occasional mistakes and failures in the fulfillment of appointments.

2. *Local Conferences.* We have of late substituted a less complicated and more informal method of Local Conferences, bringing together groups of churches conveniently situated in contiguous parishes. The appointments have been left to the option of individual churches; the meetings held monthly, and going round from church to church of the particular group thus associated. Thus the long journeys which proved a burden and often a hindrance in the former system were obviated. Something was lost in the failure of the remoter churches to keep up their mutual acquaintance, but on the whole this system has proved more beneficial in provoking one another to love and good works. Perhaps the best feature of these Conferences has been the social interview at noon, when the members have partaken together of a collation, so simple as to entail no extra burdens of hospitality and keep none at home to serve tables; thus leaving the whole day free for the greatest spiritual benefits to all concerned.

3. *Christian Conventions.* In addition to these Local Conferences, we have enjoyed a series of "Christian Conventions," conducted under the auspices of the Young Men's Christian Associations. These have been specially useful in promoting the Christian acquaintance and zeal of the young men of our larger towns. They have helped to bring into our County work a new and vital element, causing younger blood to pulsate through the churches, and indirectly but powerfully aiding in the general cause of Home Evangelization.

4. *County Assistant.* We have for three years past employed a special agent, the County Assistant. In 1863, a Committee was appointed by our County Conference to consider what could be done, and with instructions to expend a certain sum, according to their judgment, not exceeding $800. They decided that efficiency in the work required some person to be given to it; and their first plan was to employ one of our settled pastors, expending the money in providing a temporary supply as might be needed for his own pulpit. But providentially, Rev. William C. Foster, who had just resigned his pastoral charge at North Becket, was recommended to the Committee, and he was employed for a special work of a few weeks in one of our neglected districts. This led to an engagement of three years, continuing to the present time. The first year, he

was chiefly occupied in exploring the County, prospecting its religious needs, searching out the neglected places, finding centres for preaching on the Sabbath, and holding Neighborhood meetings during the week, visiting from house to house, and engaging in personal religious conversation.

The second year proved to be one of unusual religious interest; and in addition to the previous work, he aided several pastors in revivals, doing the work of an Evangelist, and visiting with pastors and church members from house to house. By his peculiar zeal and efficiency and catholicity of spirit, and directness of personal appeal, we think that he has done great service, in showing how this work can be and ought to be done, especially in sparse and neglected districts, and where variety of religious sentiments and more or less of mutual distrust are in the way. During the third and last year, our County Assistant has been mainly employed in a work of consolidation; in holding and fortifying the places gained, in organizing them, and so laying the foundations for permanent churches and settled pastorates. In doing this work, he has spent more time continuously in each place of labor — as in North Blandford, four months; in Jenksville, five months; and in Russell, one month. As results, churches have been already organized and pastors settled in North Blandford and in Jenksville, and the prospect in Russell is hopeful.

Our County Assistant has been supported, partly by local funds contributed in the County, and the balance from the treasury of our County Home Missionary Society. Home Missions and Home Evangelization are essentially identical in their spirit, objects and aims, and we believe that the charity which begins at home, and does its Home Missionary work most faithfully in the waste places and among the feeble churches of Hampden County, will also go the furthest abroad, and do the more generously and efficiently for our remoter Home Missions in the West and South.

5. *Neighborhood* or *Household Prayer Meetings.* These have been attended in a remarkable degree with the divine blessing. In churches where the weekly and customary prayer meeting had become stereotyped, thin and listless, these household prayer meetings, itinerating through the parish, have revived the spirit of prayer. They have brought many within the hearing and the reach of prayer, who never could be gathered in the more formal conference meetings of the church. They have proved important helps in training and developing young and timid Christians in the exercise of spiritual gifts. They have led to greater naturalness, simplicity and fervor in prayer and exhortation, to more unfolding of religious experience, to more directness and particularity in the application of truth to the personal wants of those present, and especially to the nurture of the social Christian virtues. As these household meetings gradually extend their quiet and genial Christian influences through a community, they do much to level those false social barriers which too often keep the members of the same church isolated from each other. Their evident good results have raised the question: "Cannot such means of grace be better organized, so as to belong to the permanent Home work of every church." Experiments at such organization have commenced.

6. *Organized Church Work.* We are convinced that the central and vital working principle of all thorough and effectual Home Evangelization must be in each local church, as an active and harmonious and working membership. But to work efficiently and persistently, some organization and division of labor seem to be demanded. It may suffice to outline a single experiment in this direction, lately commenced by one of our prominent churches. This church, through its Standing Church Committee, has appointed several Working Committees, the most important of which are

1. *A Committee of Hospitality.* This is composed of male and female members, under the lead of an efficient chairman, whose special duty it is, to keep a vigilant and kindly eye on any strangers who may find their way over the threshold of the sanctuary, or who may be attracted towards it — to see that they are provided with seats, and met with a cordial and Christian welcome. This Committee are provided with cards giving their names, the Pastor's address, hours of public services and weekly religious meetings, and a cordial invitation to attend them.

2. *A Committee on Neighborhood Prayer Meetings and out-of-door Sunday services.* Four of these prayer meetings are held at the same time, each week, in different places. Certain brethren are designated by the Committee, and pledged to the particular care of each meeting for a given time, to see that singers and hymn books are ready, and that it does not droop through want of that diversity of gifts which it may be in the ability and foresight of these brethren to supply. The chairman of this Committee is responsible for the meetings at large, visiting them by turns, and the pastor is welcomed whenever he can find it convenient to attend. The out-of-door Sunday services are provided for by this Committee, as to all the accessories of preaching. These services, held in pleasant weather an hour or two before sundown, have been reverently attended by audiences larger in number and more promiscuous in character than could have been attracted within any house of worship. The experiments already made would seem to indicate that out-of-door preaching in the form of brief, simple, earnest extemporaneous addresses, sustained by sympathizing brethren, with much prayer and heart-melody, skillfully and fervently expressed in familiar songs, will speak to the hearts of many who would not otherwise hear the glad tidings.

3. *A Committee on Church Prayer Meetings.* This is to secure regular and full attendance and a well-sustained interest in the regular weekly conference meetings, not in any way of official supervision, but by quiet and earnest private efforts to enlist the interest of church members, and to gather in strangers.

4. *A Committee on the Sick and Poor.* This is a large Committee of male and female members, headed by an efficient chairman, who is more than doubled by the co-operation of his wife, and whose house is a Dorcas establishment, where "coats and garments" are kept, the head-quarters of the Committee, and from which is dispensed at their discretion a fund, continually replenished by monthly collections, for the comfort and relief of the sick and the needy.

5. *A Committee on the Sunday School*, of which the Superintendent is chairman. The design of this is to pledge efficiently and practically the sympathies and aid of the church to the Sabbath school.

6. *A Committee on the Unemployed.* This is to give direction and aid to those who come from abroad to seek employment, or who by various vicissitudes find themselves unemployed and perhaps suffering from depression and heart-sickness. "As cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news," to such, and it is the Christian privilege of this Committee to administer in Christ's name "good words in due season."

7. *City Missionary.* In addition to these Committees, the church, having at present providentially with them one of their members about completing a course of training for the Christian ministry, have employed him for a time as a City Missionary. Being peculiarly fitted for the position, he is able, by visiting from house to house, to supplement much of the pastoral care which presses heavily on the minister of a large parish. By becoming acquainted also with young men coming from abroad, and with new families, who might remain strangers to Christian influences, and by tracing out their former religious associations and present needs, he is in the way of extending to such the kindly offices of Christian counsel and friendship.

Other experiments of great interest might be given as inaugurated by other churches in the County, but this one may serve to illustrate sufficiently the principle of "Organization of Church Work," as vitally essential to Home Evangelization.

Union Churches. Among the experiments of Home Evangelization in Hampden County, "*Union Churches*" deserve mention. These have been regularly organized by Councils after the Congregational method, in North Blandford, Russell and Jenksville. The peculiarity of each of these communities is, that they contain Christian believers earnestly desiring to build up the kingdom of Christ, but by their previous religious training and associations, of different denominational predilections. The question then arose, "On what practical basis shall the church be organized?" The decision has been, that it should not be a distinctly and technically denominational basis, but on the principle of a Christian union. And hence, these churches are "Union Churches," or, as they might prefer to call themselves, "Churches of Christ." A brief account of the church at Jenksville may suffice to illustrate the principle and show the working of this experiment. Its title is, "The First Church of Christ in Jenksville" Though Congregational in polity, it does not follow Congregational usage in some of its internal arrangements and customs. It names its fiscal officers "Stewards." It prefers to receive the Communion elements at the hands of the minister. It holds Sprinkling and Immersion as both valid forms of Baptism. It welcomes the sisters of the church to a participation not only in praise, but in prayer and conversation during the social meetings of the church. It prefers not to lay the strictest literal interpretation on Paul's injunctions concerning the "silence" of women, and to give a rather free interpretation to the divine encouragement implied in the passage, "Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to an-

other." The pastor of the church, Rev. Austin Gardner, states, "When I came to this field, there was no organized religious society. The book of the Methodist Church (formerly existing) had been taken away, and we had nothing to show for the existence of a church here. After the lapse of two or three months, it seemed necessary that something should be done by way of organization. A legal society we needed at any event. This we formed. The idea was suggested, that it might be more conciliatory to look up the records of the old Methodist Church, and conduct matters on that basis without attempting a new organization. But this course was not favored by those who had been connected with that body. We then organized (by a Council of Churches called for the purpose) a 'Union Church,' and I was installed pastor. I did not consider myself as pastor of a 'Congregational church,' and did not feel that it would be true to my mission, to attempt to conduct it as such. Hence, after its formation, I called the church together, and threw the responsibility of its internal operations upon the members. What they as a church of Christ desired, I desired. Thus we have commenced our existence, and are endeavoring to do our legitimate work, 'looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.' At the first Communion we received four new members. Our Sabbath school is flourishing and our prayer meetings are interesting and well sustained." We view such experiments as of great interest, as throwing light on the great question of "Christian Union." If that vexed problem is ever to be satisfactorily solved, will it not be by such genuine and earnest efforts in the actual work of Home Evangelization?

Out-Districts. We could give a long list of these, and more or less of statistical information concerning them. But we prefer to use the space, in detailing the actual history and results of Christian work done in one of these out-districts, viz: *Long Hill, Springfield.* This lies in the extreme southern limits of Springfield, contiguous to Longmeadow, and about equally remote from the churches of each place. It has been one of those neglected regions, over which no particular church has assumed any special responsibility. Consequently many of its inhabitants were non-attendants on public worship, and reached by no particular religious influences. In August, 1866, two ladies, following out a suggestion from the Spirit, begun a canvass of this district, with the intention of establishing a Sabbath school. The first session was held at the house of a Christian lady residing in Longmeadow, and five children were present. This house being somewhat remote from the majority of the people, the district school-house was obtained, and the next Sabbath there were twenty scholars. An earnest and warm hearted young man, who was engaged in circulating religious publications, and made his business the channel of personal religious conversation from house to house, praying with the inmates wherever prayer was welcomed, became a great spiritual help to these ladies engaged in the Sabbath school; and, in the month of October, a prayer-meeting was commenced, on Sunday evening, at the school-house. The few Christian people of the District immediately rallied to its support, and a few members from one of the Springfield churches encouraged and assisted them. In December, a ladies' prayer-meeting was established; and a little later,

the interest in all these efforts having largely increased, a Thursday evening prayer meeting was established. All these meetings have been continued to the present time. The results are very cheering. The number attending the Sabbath school has grown to about seventy. A Bible class on the plan of mutual instruction, composed of the old and middle-aged with the younger adults, has increased to the number of twenty, and the interest in the study of the Holy Scriptures has been deep and unabated from the first.

Early in the winter a marked interest was observed among the unconverted attending the meetings, and it became evident that God was hearing and answering the prayers of his children, and that his Spirit was striving with the unconverted. They began to rise in the meetings, desiring the prayers of Christians, and several remained after the meetings for personal religious conversation with those who labored in this vineyard. Backsliders were reclaimed, scoffing lips were silenced, obdurate hearts were melted, and soon we had delightful testimony from new-born souls (about thirteen) rejoicing in the liberty of Christ. It has been characteristic of most of these, that during the many months which have now elapsed since their conversion, their activity and zeal in the good work seems unabated. Living streams of heavenly influences have flowed down on every side from this little hill of Zion, but a few months ago a neglected and almost barren waste. It has been a good example of the real work of Home Evangelization; of the fruit which the Lord of the vineyard seeketh for among the churches. The neighboring ministers have had very little to do with the work in this instance. These meetings and this Sabbath school have not waited for them nor leaned upon them. Very few sermons have been preached, but there has been abundant prayer and Christian conversation and searching of the Scriptures, with the persistent diligence of a few faithful, earnest, loving brethren and sisters, fellow-helpers in the Lord; and from this little city of our God, set upon this hill, have streamed forth light and joy to thrill the hearts of ministers and churches all around.

WORCESTER COUNTY.

Worcester North Conference. This Conference includes fourteen churches, in ten towns, in the northwestern part of Worcester County, with one in Franklin County. Its field is one of very considerable difficulty; and yet the number of out-districts seems to be small. Only four are reported, of which two are cared for. Returns have been received from only one third of the churches, but these seem to indicate a healthful and improving condition. The churches have begun to give special attention to the subject of Home Evangelization.

Worcester Central Conference. This Conference comprises eighteen churches, in fifteen towns of the east-central portion of the County. Only three out-districts are returned, and these are still unreached. A very interesting Report has been furnished by Rev. AMOS H. COOLIDGE, Chairman of the Committee on Home Evangelization; from which, however, our space permits us to make only the following extracts. (For Statistics, see Appendix.)

"Thirteen of the fourteen County churches have, with different degrees of accuracy, furnished returns." "From data in our possession, we infer that the attendance upon public worship in the city of Worcester is nearly the same with the average of the towns. We are not probably far from the truth, then, in estimating the attendance upon church (counting all the members of church going families) at 70 per cent, and the non-attendance at 30 per cent. Reckoning the population of Worcester at 35,000, and that of the towns, 25,000, we have a total of 60,000. Consequently, the neglecters of the sanctuary, to a great extent, also, neglected by the churches, must number about 18,000.

"These may be divided into several classes. *One* class embraces the openly wicked, the profane, the intemperate, the unprincipled, who publicly desecrate the Sabbath, and are regardless of all restraint."

"*Another* class is composed of the poor, or those in moderate circumstances, who do not feel at home with their more wealthy neighbors."

"A *third* class embraces families of intelligence and social standing, who have either been perverted by false views of religion and the Sabbath, or are borne away from religious influences on the wave of fashion."

"A *fourth* consists of persons who are sensitive, and whose feelings have been injured in their intercourse with the church."

"A *fifth* comprises those who reside at some distance from church, and have not sufficient interest or energy to overcome the difficulties in the way of a regular attendance."

In reference to the question, What shall be done? the Report urges the importance of a distinct marking out of parishes, and an acknowledgment by every church, of its definite responsibility, followed at once by a searching out of neglecters and efforts to reach them.

The Report also insists upon the principle, that we must depend chiefly upon the central and established means of grace. "Any measures which conflict with this principle, which are not either tributary to the church, or do not look forward to the formation of a church, — where the situation demands this step, — will be likely to prove fruitful of but transient good and permanent evil."

The grand difficulty here, as in so many other places, is simply a lack of Christian earnestness. "One minister writes: 'I find none to enter into the work heartily, but enough to express doubts as to its practicability.' And this, in a town, more than one half of whose inhabitants are neglecters. Another writes in the same vein, from a town where *two thirds* of the people are not reached by the stated means of grace." "The grand necessity, therefore, is a nobler, more active and self-sacrificing type of piety."

The Brookfield Associational Conference. This Conference embraces fifteen churches, in fourteen towns, situated in the southwestern part of Worcester County, with two churches in Franklin and two in Hampden County. No Committee on Home Evangelization has been appointed; but the Conference regularly devotes an entire evening to the consideration of the subject, in which it practically resolves itself into a Committee of the whole upon the state of the churches. Four out-districts are reported;

none of which, at the latest accounts, were cared for. In one, however, it is "proposed soon to commence religious meetings, with the distribution of tracts." These districts all present most serious difficulties, of the kind which can only be overcome by the "prayer and fasting" that moves mountains. And yet, it is the peculiar privilege of Christians, and the special office of churches, to overcome precisely these obstacles.

Worcester South Conference. This Conference embraces fourteen churches, in ten towns, in the southern part of the County. It has no Committee on Home Evangelization; nor has it, as yet, entered upon any efforts to collect the facts and statistics bearing upon this subject. The brethren feel greatly embarrassed by the frequent changes in the pastoral office, and declare it to be impracticable even to obtain reliable returns of the condition of the several parishes; much more, to maintain steadfastly a comprehensive system of aggressive labor. They see large numbers of people, in almost all their towns, living in habitual neglect of the Gospel, and recognize the unmistakable fact that the hold of religion upon their communities has been growing feebler for a generation, and has not yet begun to grow stronger, while the proportion of church members has seriously diminished. At a recent Conference of these churches, it was stated by one of their ministers, that a comparison of the membership of thirteen churches in 1844 and 1864, showed a positive loss of 188, though the population has very largely increased. Only five churches had gained in communicants. But they have, thus far, been compelled reluctantly to acknowledge that no way has been made plain to them, in which this state of things may be improved. The subject is one that *will not wait*, but ought to engage the immediate prayerful attention of all the members of these churches. It cannot be that Heaven is deaf to their prayers.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY.

Middlesex Union Conference. This Conference comprises eleven churches, in ten towns, lying in the northwestern part of Middlesex; and five churches, of as many towns, in the northeastern part of Worcester County. A considerable increase of Christian activity has been manifest during the past year. The subject of Home Evangelization has engaged the earnest attention of the churches, in conferences and conventions, and the Divine blessing has been granted upon their labors. Of the sixteen out-districts, six are now reported as reached by Christian efforts.* Most of these enterprises are of recent institution, and afford encouraging indications. But there is hardly any part of the State, of equal extent, containing so many *large* neighborhoods that demand special attention. There are not less than six, having a population ranging between 150 and 500. The more carefully we study the condition of these communities, the more are we impressed with the difficulty, and also with the necessity of establishing within every one of them an organized and permanent Christian centre. It is not impossible, that in one or two of these places a wise and energetic movement might, ere long, result in gathering a permanent congregation and church.

* Later reports show a larger and most encouraging progress.

Woburn Conference. This Conference embraces sixteen churches, in fourteen towns, mostly in the eastern part of Middlesex County. Only three out-districts are reported; all cared for. An effort has been made to secure the establishment of a Congregational church in Lexington, and the house of worship is now near completion. Endeavors *to provide settled pastors for all the feeble churches* have been entirely successful. The stronger churches aided liberally with contributions for enlarging salaries, and the weaker churches have been encouraged and strengthened. Not only is this example worthy of imitation, but, unless it is followed, we cannot expect that Massachusetts will ever become a thoroughly Christian State.

Middlesex South Conference. This Conference consists of seventeen churches, in fourteen towns, within the borders of Middlesex, and two churches in a town belonging to Worcester County. Thirteen out-districts are reported, of which four are statedly cared for. The Committee report, however, that "a number of churches that a year ago were engaged in Christian effort at out-stations, have been led to suspend these efforts by changes in the pastorate or in parochial limits. The others are kept up with vigor and success. The old stations will be renewed when the churches are supplied with pastors and temporary obstacles are removed."

MIDDLESEX AND ESSEX COUNTIES.

Andover Conference. This Conference comprises eight churches in four towns of Essex, and eleven churches in four towns of Middlesex County. Rev. CALEB E. FISHER, Chairman of the Committee, has sent us the following Report:

No special systematic work has been done out of Lawrence, except such as a few of the churches have done by Sunday schools in remote and destitute places, and by one meeting in Andover for preaching, conducted by the theological students. In Lowell they have public preaching in the open air. There also they have some Sunday schools in destitute sections of the city.

In Andover they hold three or four Sabbath schools in remote and destitute parts of the town, and gather many who would otherwise not be reached by the Gospel.

In Lawrence five such schools are held. One, a sixth, has already grown into an Episcopal church. Another has erected a very neat and commodious chapel at an expense of $5,000, where Prof. Park has preached two years. There have been many conversions, and probably a Congregational church will be organized there this fall. There is every prospect now, that that will become a large and important church in a few years. It will embrace all of the city on the south side of the river. Beside these, the Lawrence Street church have two out-schools, one in the extreme west part of the city, and another in the east, each gathering about one hundred adults and children. The Eliot church holds one, and the English Methodists hold one, where they gather 150, who otherwise would be roaming the streets.

Last winter we determined to hold religious meetings for prayer and preaching in the large boarding houses. These were freely opened to us. Most of the evangelical pastors engaged in this work. I think, hundreds have by these means been drawn to our churches; and probably, it would not be too much to say, that one hundred neglecters of worship have thus been hopefully *converted* and united with the evangelical churches. We have divided the city into eleven districts, one for each evangelical church, and each church is to try in its own way to carry the Gospel to every family. It is yet too early to give definite results from this labor; but I expect much from it, which I will report at the earliest day.

ESSEX COUNTY.

Essex North Conference. Twenty-four churches; twelve towns. Only two out-districts are found within the bounds of this Conference, one of which has been regularly supplied with preaching. Occasional meetings are held in the other. Just over the borders, however, in New Hampshire, there was a neglected district, containing a population of 600 souls, with 245 children between the ages of 4 and 14. For a long period there had been much drinking and Sabbath breaking and many quarrels. No vigorous effort had been made for ten years. In April, a series of meetings was commenced; the school-house was over-crowded; more than 150 persons expressed an interest for their souls, and many were converted. There was a great deal of personal effort and preaching from house to house, and in July a church was organized, which promises to be an active and working church.

Essex South Conference. Twenty-five churches; sixteen towns. Five out-districts are reported, of which all but one are reached with regular and vigorous Christian efforts. The fifth presents difficulties of a peculiarly embarrassing nature. The very imperfect returns show that at least ten of the churches are engaged in efforts to reach neglecters of the sanctuary. By one, Bibles and tracts have been distributed, and a neighborhood meeting has been held. Another reports "visiting from house to house." Marblehead has been divided into six districts, and visitors have called at every house. In Lynn, also, the Methodist and Baptist churches have united with our own, in a careful districting of the city, for permanent and systematic labor; and the First Congregational church has divided its portion into twenty-three sub-districts, the majority of which are now regularly visited every month, and their families supplied with religious papers, the reports of the visitors being regularly presented to the church at its *Home prayer meeting.*

At a meeting of the pastors and delegates of the churches of the three denominations, Resolutions were adopted, (1) recognizing the need of concerted action on the part of these churches; (2) recommending the churches all to accept the districts marked out; (3) engaging to establish the Home prayer meeting; and (4) advising that a Union Home prayer meeting be held once a quarter, or, at the least, twice every year.

In some of the towns, the neglect of public worship is ominously large. The First Church, Danvers, reports 35 per cent of the population of its

territorial parish as neglecters; the Second Church, Lynnfield, 30 per cent; the two churches of Manchester, 34 and 43 per cent; while Lynn returns 50 per cent; Middleton, 50 per cent; and Saugus Centre, two thirds of the population.

From the Report presented by Rev. JAMES M. WHITON, Chairman of the Committee, we make the following extract:

In the work of Home Evangelization, of course the pastors and members of the churches must be co-laborers. And your Committee would question whether this subject had been made a matter of *private conference* between pastors and like-minded church members to any adequate extent. In this, we are persuaded, will be found the solution of some real difficulties. It is an easy matter to preach, and say that something ought to be done; but modesty, or diffidence, or ignorance of the best methods, or an over-estimate of difficulties, or a disposition to rely on some traditional means, though experience has proved them ineffectual, combine to deter or prevent many Christians from "stirring up the gift that is in them." Moreover, the same measures may not prove best in all places. Recommendations of outsiders to do this or that in a certain parish may seem ill adapted, and action may therefore fail entirely, unless some warm hearts and wise heads can get together to solve the problem, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" By the *private conferences* of a very few earnest and resolute ones, in each parish, more would be accomplished in devising ways, removing difficulties, mapping out the work, and enlisting, one by one, the active sympathy of many brethren. If there is any church, where the pastor despairs of any well-directed effort for the neglecters of the sanctuary, let but two or three gather together in Christ's name, weekly or fortnightly, to pray and talk over this thing, and there will be light speedily. "Who art thou, great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain." The enthusiasm of two or three will infect more. Personal solicitation will draw hesitating brethren to their duty, when it is clearly shown just *what* is to be done, and just *how* it is to be done.

Your Committee, in view of the present state of the whole matter, would propose the following *Resolutions* to be adopted by the Conference.

1. *Resolved*, That every church member should make the Home Evangelization work a subject of daily prayer, that he may realize what is the field around *him*, and what is *his* duty to go and work in that field.

2. *Resolved*, That wherever a pastor apprehends that his church is not prepared in heart to do what ought to be done in this work, it is his first duty to labor to prepare the church.

3. *Resolved*, That it behooves all Christians as "ambassadors of Christ," earnest and sincere, to look at the *encouragements*, rather than the *discouragements*, of the Master's work.

4. *Resolved*, That so long as present means fail to reach the residents of our parishes with Gospel truth, it is our duty to try other means, until they are reached, "all things to all men, if that by any means we may save some."

The Chairman of the Committee adds: "I am convinced of the need of assiduous and minute attention to this work, in its incipient stages, by all pastors who want it to succeed. It won't go of itself."

Although the number of out-districts in this County is small, that of neglecters is considerable; and the churches are, as yet, by no means fully alive to their duty. With great strength, in numbers, wealth and intelligence, they occupy a most commanding position. Remembering ever our dependence upon the Spirit of God, we may yet say, it is quite within the power of the Congregational churches in Essex County, — in loving co-operation with those of other names, — to regain all lost ground in that ancient Puritan domain, and to gather the people under the banner of the cross. Nor are any counsellors, in this matter, more able and trustworthy than her own pastors and other elders, with her honorable women, not a few.

NORFOLK AND PLYMOUTH COUNTIES.

Norfolk Conference. Twenty-two churches in ten towns of Norfolk; ten churches in five towns of Plymouth; and one church in Bristol County. Total, thirty-three churches; sixteen towns.

Only five out-districts are reported. Of these, three are cared for; and one has been greatly blessed, about twenty hopeful conversions having taken place. A hall is here secured, and regular services are established.

Mendon Conference. Thirteen churches. Nine towns — seven in Norfolk, two in Worcester, and one in Bristol County. Two out-districts reported; both provided for. Ritualism crowding for a foothold.

The illness of the Chairman of the Committee has interfered with methodical investigations.

BRISTOL COUNTY.

Taunton Conference. Eighteen churches in twelve towns of Bristol; and two churches in two towns of Plymouth County. Total, twenty churches, and fourteen towns. One town with no Congregational church.

Nine out-districts are reported; of which six are statedly reached with Christian efforts. Very flourishing Branch Sunday schools are also sustained in Fall River. Measures are on foot in Taunton, likewise, for new enterprises; and the reports received indicate a growing interest and activity.

BRISTOL AND PLYMOUTH COUNTIES.

Old Colony Conference. Seven churches in four towns of Bristol, and seven churches in five towns of Plymouth County; total, fourteen churches and nine towns.

Eleven out-districts are reported; and in two of them Branch Sunday schools. Some of the other localities are extremely vicious and degraded. The majority of the churches in this Conference are not very strong, and the labor demanded of them is both great and very difficult. The churches have not, as yet, seen any way in which it can be accomplished. A judicious and able *County Assistant* could do a good service here.

PLYMOUTH COUNTY.

Pilgrim Conference. Fourteen churches, in nine towns. Three towns with no Congregational church.

By direction of the State Committee, special attention has been given to this Conference, the past year. The Secretary, besides attending its meetings, and preaching in all its churches, (with one exception,) secured arrangements for holding smaller "Neighborhood Conferences," consisting of four or five churches each. In these meetings, the demands of the several fields and their peculiar difficulties were prayerfully considered, and the practical questions were confronted. The case of every out-district was examined, and the causes of neglect together with possible remedies, were searched into. The meetings were felt to be useful, and will probably be renewed the coming autumn.

Of eight out-districts, all but one is cared for, and this one is not overlooked; but the church within whose parish it falls has not yet been able to provide for it.

Rev. EBENEZER ALDEN, Jr., of the Committee on Home Evangelization, has furnished a Report of much interest, with statistical returns, which, though incomplete, are the result of much labor.

EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORT.

Pilgrim Conference. Returns have been received from nine of our fourteen churches. Though we have not accomplished what was desired and hoped, an important advance has been made upon the last year. We submit the returns received, and a table compiled from them. (See Appendix.)

The Pilgrim Conference covers the territory of twelve towns: Plymouth, Kingston, Duxbury, Marshfield, and Scituate, on the Bay; South Scituate, Hanover, Pembroke, Hanson, Halifax, Plympton, and Carver, lying back from the sea. It has no church in Duxbury, Pembroke, and South Scituate, a tier of towns extending through the centre of this territory. But members of its churches are in each of the towns, while the Wesleyan church in Duxbury and its pastor cordially affiliate with the Congregational churches and pastors of the vicinity, so that the difference of denomination is, in reality, hardly more than a difference in *name*.

Its territory is about twenty miles in length by ten in width, containing some 250 square miles, and, including Plymouth woods and South Carver, its area covers some 300 square miles. The population of these twelve towns in 1865, was 22,685. Our churches number 1,096 members, a little less than .05 of the population; somewhat below the average of the State, which is a little under .06.

In this territory there are 8 Methodist, 8 Baptist, 1 Wesleyan, and 2 Episcopalian churches; also, a small African church, a Friends' meeting-house, and possibly one or two others; somewhat over 20. Of unevangelical denominations there are 7 Unitarian, and 2 Universalist congregations, besides two or more places of worship occupied by Spiritists, in

all, 11. There are likewise three chapels, two of them built for evangelical preaching.

According to the printed documents of the Pilgrim Conference, in 1848, over three tenths, of all denominations, attended worship. In 1851, about one third.* A somewhat careful estimate of the actual attendance upon public worship, last year, led to the same conclusion, viz. that about one third of our population may be regarded as neglecters of the sanctuary. If we narrow down the attendance upon public worship to the evangelical churches, this proportion of course would be increased.

It seems probable that the neglect of public worship within our bounds, does not materially vary from that in other parts of the State. Our number of churches, however, is proportionally larger. Here, we have one to about 1,600 of the population; while in Massachusetts at large, we have but one to about 2,500. Our churches and congregations, therefore, may be expected to reach less than two thirds of the average for the State. And such is the case; for of our fourteen churches, only one, that in Plymouth village, numbers over 200 members, and only one other numbers over 100 members.

Our population is small for our territory. On the south lies a region as little changed as any perhaps in Massachusetts, within two hundred years; while the central part of our territory is, to a considerable extent, a wilderness, or thinly inhabited.

Emigration seriously affects us. The south shore is constantly drained of its population, in this respect somewhat resembling the mountain towns. Seven of our twelve towns are untraversed by a railroad. The tendency of emigration is to take away the church-going portion of the people, and to supersede it by an irreligious class. The work of popular christianization, therefore, within our bounds, must be carried on by *small churches over a large territory*.

Our churches suffer, again, from hindrances to communion, which is more easily maintained elsewhere. One portion is separated from the other by a tier of towns in which the doctrines of the cross are rejected. Our meetings of the Pilgrim Conference are thinly attended, compared with those of the Norfolk Conference in our neighborhood. In a number of our churches it is even difficult to maintain the prayer meeting, even in name. No doubt the Pilgrim Conference has a work to do; but evidently under the depressing influence resulting from the situation of our field, with feeble and disjointed forces. When we come to contemplate the bearing of the past upon our present condition, we find much instruction in the review, and very much encouragement.

The defection from the faith of the fathers is made, in certain quarters, a standing argument against our church polity. It should be known that under this polity, the lost ground has been to a good degree reoccupied. The fact is not without significance, that the first case of *secession for* the faith of the Pilgrim Fathers — since followed by nearly a hundred in

* These statements refer to the *audiences*, not including those kept from the sanctuary by infirmity or by cares. The actual hearers ordinarily represent a church-going population of twice their number. D. P. N.

Massachusetts — occurred in the first church of their planting on these shores, in the movement that resulted in the formation of the *Third* Church, Plymouth, May 12, 1802.

The reaction against the Half Way Covenant system, appears to have furnished the Baptists with an opportunity for entering this field. It also may somewhat account for the indifference, too generally prevailing in our own churches, towards household baptism. The lapse of the old churches into Arminianism, also explains in part the entrance and success of Methodism, particularly in the Unitarian tier of towns. Few if any of the Baptist and Methodist churches would have been formed had the old churches remained living churches. The multiplication of small churches of different denominations seems, at present, unfortunate, and an unnecessary division of the friends of the Redeemer; and yet we heartily accord to these instrumentalities the salvation of multitudes of precious souls. Among the lessons of our history, hardly any is more impressive than this: That every church, if it would thrive, must be a living church, doing "*home work.*"

To this "home work," the churches are now addressing themselves. If their beginning is feeble, they still have the assurance that even a little leaven suffices for the whole lump.

BARNSTABLE COUNTY.

Barnstable Conference. Twenty-one churches; twelve towns, one of which, Nantucket, is in Nantucket County.

Three out-districts are reported from this county and five from Nantucket. Those upon the Cape are provided for; those on the island are not. The church at Nantucket has a parish too large for its strength; and some way should be devised for giving it a reinforcement.

The people of Barnstable County appear to be a church-going people — in the sense, at least, that a smaller proportion of them are to be counted as neglecters, than of the inhabitants of any other county in the State. The statistics of last year would seem to indicate that this proportion is very much smaller. And yet, a very great work here remains to be done, and very peculiar difficulties are to be surmounted. Considerable activity has prevailed, during the past year, in Neighborhood Conferences, and in other ways, with excellent results.

SUFFOLK COUNTY.

The reports from this County are omitted for lack of room.

OUT-DISTRICTS.

We here give extracts from returns received from the several Conferences, indicative of the progress in this part of the work of the churches. In Part I, we give the report of last year respecting certain localities, and add that of the present year.

Part I.

Districts Reported in 1866.

1. Population 190. People poor, proud and prejudiced. Very ignorant. Somewhat thievish. A branch meeting-house built. Much unwillingness to attend, or send children to the Sunday school. Services and school held regularly. Prejudices gradually yielding and attendance improving. (1.) 1867. A hard fight. The school prospering. The *black board* introduced with good success, as a means of fastening truths and texts more firmly in the mind.

3. Five out-districts in one parish. Total population over 400. Nothing done for them. (2.) 1867. In *one*, occasional preaching. Three church members. A Sunday school in the summer, sustained by two or three pious women. The people go out in their boats on Sunday as much as on any other day.

Another, an out of the way place — the darkest spot, intellectually, morally and spiritually, in the region. No efforts.

5. A community of colored people, of 100 souls. Heathen. Have a Sunday school. Efforts, "without success." (5.) 1867. Meetings held by *Methodists* from a neighboring town.

6. A whole town destitute. An old meeting-house still standing, and occupied occasionally, by another denomination. "People abundantly able to pay a good salary, but are not agreed." (9.) 1867. The denominations have been persuaded to unite in one church and society. Prospects improving.

7. A strong church with four out-districts. On one road, no church-goer for miles. Movements recently commenced. (6.) 1867. These movements a great success. Chapel built. Good congregations. Revival and thirty conversions. The mother church also greatly blessed, and pushing forward in Christian activity.

8. A district of 50 families—far out of the reach of any church. Need a house of worship of their own. Movements recently started to aid them in building one. (8.) 1867. The meeting-house is now building.

9. A district of over 70 families. Few of them attend elsewhere. Occasional meetings held. "Ought to have a minister of their own." (7.) 1867. Now cared for by the nearest church — in a neighboring town.

10. Whole school districts wherein not three families attend any evangelical church. Universalism prevalent. (12.) 1867. Universalism has held sway here for 40 or 50 years. Not half the people attend religious service anywhere; yet, if any effort is made, the Universalists step in and claim them. All profess to belong somewhere. About one half of the inhabitants call themselves Universalists. Hardly one sixth are Congregationalists.

11. The whole western border, the middle, and the south-western parts of a town — all out-districts. No efforts reported. (10.) 1867. A Sunday school started, for two school districts. Prayer meetings a part of the year. A manifest general improvement.

12. Forty families. Most attend nowhere. Principally American. Intemperance, profanity and Sabbath-breaking abound. The people are

satisfied to remain as they are. Have probably been thus neglectful and neglected for forty years or more. Neighboring ministers have, at seasons, held meetings, for months together, but have given up. A Moravian labored for a year or more. Sunday schools have at times been maintained. The people have been visited by a colporter and by Bible agents. No efforts making now. (11.) 1867. The church has, as yet, done nothing but talk on the subject in its prayer meetings. But this has not been in vain. Religious meetings will soon be commenced, with the distribution of tracts.

17. More than half of the township, and three-fourths of its population, utterly neglectful. The church reduced by emigration, and very weak. Another denomination crowding in, with the avowed purpose of supplanting it. A Universalist region. Hardly a praying man to be found. The school district much divided. School broken up for several winters, and a good one, sure to be. Endeavor made to break it up, or prevent the teacher from reading the Bible and praying in school. (18.) 1867. In this and other places in the county, expect soon to introduce the *County Assistant* — the only practicable method of reaching the people.

18. A rural district, two miles or more from church. General neglect, owing to distance and to Universalism. (16½.) 1867. A Sunday school established by the agent of the S. S. Union. Flourishing. The people turn out well to preaching. A *Praise Meeting* held every Sabbath.

19. A feeble Home Missionary church in a village that has recently sprung up on a railroad, and where 70 per cent of the people must be counted as neglecters, and 50 per cent as wholly unconnected with any congregation—has three out-districts; one of them a very wicked place, a resort for dissipation. The church is not able fully to occupy its field. (17.) 1867. Two out-posts on the mountains attended to by the pastor.

24. A factory village one mile from church. Branch Sunday school recently commenced. Attendance good. (21.) 1867. The pastor gone. A Sunday evening prayer meeting sustained by church members.

28. An old desolation. A good beginning made. (27.) 1867. Passed into the hands of the Methodists.

28½. A rural neighborhood of 60 or 70 families; a considerable number neglecters. Pastoral visitation in connection with weekly neighborhood meetings greatly blessed. A revival. (30.) 1867. Neighborhood prayer meetings still sustained. Also, a prayer meeting. Attendance at preaching, 100; and average, 60. Average at prayer meetings, 40. The "moral barometer" has risen very much during the year. Nearly all the Protestant families attend. Efforts greatly blessed.

30. A railroad village of about 50 families, mostly American. About 30 families habitual neglecters. Inclined to infidelity and lax morals. Sunday school suspended for lack of a room. A chapel needed. (28.) 1867. The Sunday school started again and prospering. Attendance, 75 or 80. Also, a meeting held by the pastor, once a fortnight.

32. A neighborhood of 50 or 60 families, wholly neglectful, owing to distance, Universalism and Spiritism. No effort reported. (32.) 1867. Apathy, Universalism and intemperance still have the ground.

33. A manufacturing village on a railroad. Population about 400. No church members. A few Sabbath evening meetings have been held, with good attendance and excellent attention. The desire expressed for frequent meetings. (40.) 1867. The ground carefully surveyed; but the nearest church too weak to undertake the task. An associate effort imperatively demanded.

35. A population of 200, mainly American. "Need a local prayer meeting." (39.) 1867. The population is 300. A Neighborhood meeting begun in 1866, in a private house. A *revival*, which has blessed the whole parish, commenced here.

37. Mill village. Population 300—half Irish, half native. Some visitation and tract distribution. (38.) 1867. Population of whole territory about 400—many French, some Irish, and a very poor class of Americans. Nothing done. Hope to start a Sunday school and prayer meeting.

39. A population of 100 or 150. No effort reported. (37.) 1867. A prayer meeting recently established.

40. Population of 500 or 600, of Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists and Unitarians. A manufacturing railroad village — a mile or mile and a half from church. A good hall. Good weekly prayer meeting. Frequent preaching. Many attend at "the centre." "Ought to be a Congregational church." (36.) 1867. Prayer meetings sustained on Friday and Sunday evenings.

42. A manufacturing community, near a railroad, of 200 families — mostly foreign, English, Scotch and others. A good church within easy reach; but the people will not go. A Sunday evening service recently opened. Attendance, 150, prospects very encouraging, if a chapel can be built. "There cannot be imagined a place on the face of this earth" (said a neighboring minister, previous to the effort just mentioned) "more destitute of the Gospel than this factory village." (44.) 1867. Prospects spoiled by a church quarrel.

45. A community of 125 families, largely Irish and German, two miles, or more, from church. Till recently nothing done for them. A Neighborhood meeting with thorough visitation, by a lay helper, lately commenced, with very encouraging success. (45.) Results, 1867. An improved state of feeling in reference to religion and religious ordinances; a few conversions; a sensible quickening of the Christian life. A Sunday evening prayer meeting still kept up, which is attended by some who go nowhere else and who give good attention.

46. A district from two to three miles from church, population, 400 or more. Few regular attendants. Neglect results from distance, an old quarrel, and a vague social jealousy. Occasional Adventist preaching; but greatly disliked by many. Promising effort now in progress. (50.) 1867. The Sunday school well maintained. A layman spending two or three weeks in visiting and holding meetings, was rewarded with 20 or 30 hopeful conversions.

51. A border district. Neighborhood meetings recently started. The people grateful, and disposed to do all they can to make the effort a suc-

cess. Attendance from 30 to 60. (50 *a.*) 1867. The effort moving prosperously forward.

53. A district with an American population of about 300, one mile from the church. Fifteen years ago the people almost wholly neglecters, and strongly inclined to infidelity. Infidel influence predominant. One leading man an atheist, another an open unbeliever — both active in promulgating their sentiments and in distributing Tom Paine's works and books of infamous immorality.

About fifteen years ago, a Union Sunday evening service was started in the school-house; and has been sustained to the present time, notwithstanding the district at one time voted to close the house against religious services, and forbade the opening of the day school with prayer. *And now*, the people generally attend public worship, and the character of the community has undergone an entire change. (54 *b.*) 1867. Preaching, once a month. A Branch Sunday school of 75 members.

58. A large community. No evangelical church. Much wealth, but much ignorance concerning religion, and a great deal of hatred and bigotry. A promising movement on foot for a church. (54.) 1867. The movement a success. A building purchased by gentlemen in Boston. The Conference furnishes $3,000 to put it in shape for religious uses.

59. A defunct Methodist church. No preaching in this part of the town for twelve or fourteen years. (56.) 1867. A peculiarly hard place — heathenish — practically atheistic. Wealthy farmers, but almost universally infidel and virulently opposed to all evangelical Christians. This is attributable in part to the influence of a prominent farmer, now dead.

60. A factory village of several hundred souls. Children between 5 and 15 years, 318. Most of the people habitual neglecters. No movement reported. (61.) 1867. The whole town made up of out-districts. In various places, a practical heathenism.

64. A factory village near an important town. "Ought to be a Sunday school." (59.) 1867. Population 300 — half American. A Branch Sunday school just established.

Part II.

Districts not referred to in the Report of 1866.

67. A Sunday evening service and weekly prayer meeting established. A hall secured, dedicated, and furnished with settees and a "Mason & Hamlin" organ. Nearly the whole population attend. About 20 hopeful conversions. A decided improvement visible. (44 *a.*)

68. A district of sixteen families — six, Irish. Some attend church. The rest resist all efforts for their good. A number under the influence of a very wicked man. The neighborhood is *not* neglected. (43 *a.*)

69. Quite a village, nearly three miles from the centre. Much Christian labor, with good results. A weekly female prayer meeting sustained, mainly by two, earnest Christian ladies. A branch Sunday school, once a fortnight, and a preaching service alternating with this school. The school averages 50 scholars; the preaching service, from 80 to 100 attendants, and is frequented by persons who go nowhere else. (43 *b.*)

70. A meeting established in 1866 began with 29, and has increased to an average of 60. Early last fall, there was a religious interest, and four or five conversions. Meetings, once a fortnight. (43 *e.*)

71. Three miles from the meeting-house. A Branch Sunday school, with 40 or 50 pupils, or more. The neighborhood largely Universalist and Swedenborgian. (49 *a.*)

72. Three and a half miles from the church. A Branch Sunday school, with 30 scholars. (49 *b.*)

73. Two and a half miles from church. Most of the people neglecters. None of the children have been accustomed to attend. A Branch Sunday school organized by two recent converts. (49 *e.*)

75. Four miles from church. A monthly distribution of tracts. A Branch Sunday school, of 40 pupils. Neighborhood meetings held in three places. (52 *b.*)

76. Regular preaching and prayer meetings. All the families attend. Nearly all the children in the Sunday school. (15 *a.*)

77. Population of 300. A Branch service. A church recently organized and pastor obtained. (25 *a.*)

78. A large territory much neglected. Needs continual lay effort. (18 *a.*)

79. People disgusted and tired with past efforts. A new church formed, with good prospects. (18 *b.*)

80. A Sabbath evening meeting and a weekly prayer meeting sustained by laymen. "The greenest spot and most religious part of the town, illustrating the invaluable influence of a few Christian families." (25 *b.*)

81. A small district, two miles from church. A Sunday school every Sabbath afternoon, with 40 scholars; and a prayer meeting in the evening — the hall well filled — and also on Tuesday evening. (28 *a.*)

82. A neighborhood containing Orthodox, Baptists, Unitarians; Germans, and Irish. A "third service" attended by from 40 to 60, who seem much interested. Only one or two Christian families. The influential married men are unbelievers. A very loose place. Some of the people of the very lowest sort. (29 *a.*)

83. Three and a half miles from the centre. People ready to attend church, but unable. Prayer meetings held. (32 *c.*)

Two districts, two miles and three miles from centre. In each, preaching at 5 o'clock every Sabbath afternoon, and also a Sunday school. Ministers of various denominations join in the services. (32 *a.*)

84. A neighborhood a mile and a half from church, American, respectable, many Spiritists, numbering in all about 175. Seven eighths of them habitual neglecters. No special efforts. What can be done? (55 *c.*)

85. A district a mile and a half from church. A Branch Sunday school established in 1854. Previously, the people almost all neglecters; and none of the children receiving religious instruction. Success immediate. Great interest among the people. A prayer meeting established. A chapel with 250 seats built; and is often full. The usual attendance about 150. Regular preaching for a number of years, on Sunday afternoons. A happy change observable in the people — in their general thrift, better observance of the Sabbath, and more devoted moral lives. A number of conversions.

Another result. An evident increase of faith, benevolence, and spiritual joy among those who have made pecuniary sacrifices, or have actively engaged in self-denying Christian service. (14 *a*.)

86. A small manufacturing neighborhood, three and a half miles from church. A Sunday school and prayer meeting established two years ago, and sustained by the brethren. The prayer meeting attended by from 100 to 150 persons. (14 *b*.)

87. An out-district, till recently occupied by the nearest Congregational church, now by the Methodists. (3 *a*.)

88. Population 500. A chapel seating over 100. Regular preaching, and a large Sunday school. (5 *c*.)

89. Population 200. A Branch Sunday school. Contributed $65 for books and papers. (5 *b*.)

90. Population 300. Young men just establishing a Sunday school. (5 *a*.)

91. An out-district, two and a half miles from church, till recently a *proverb*. Now a chapel, regular services, and Sunday school, with most promising signs of success. A very beautiful illustration of Christian charity and zeal, and its reward. (5 *c*.)

92. A large number of iron-workers. A dancing hall hired, for $200. Regular services. Good attendance. (6½.)

93. An unoccupied meeting-house. Nothing done. "Rum rules." (10 *b*.)

94. A Home Missionary church—fruit of the present Home Evangelization movement — is sustaining a Branch Sunday school in another town. Most who attend have no other religious privileges. (10 *c*.)

95. A whole town "made up of out-districts." Church not strong or united. Nothing done. (10 *d*.)

96. One of the oldest neighborhoods in the State, now from two to three miles from church. About 20 families. Almost all habitual neglecters. — Unbelief and indifference — the slow growth of one or two generations. (13 *b*.)

97. A farming region. No church within five miles of its centre. No Congregational church member. A great deal of irreligion. Last year, a Sunday evening service and a school, by the Congregational church. Now, a Methodist minister has located himself there. (18½.)

98. An important point. Meetings held in private houses. Attendance, 60 to 70. A *church* formed. (18 *c*.)

99. Two miles from the centre. A Branch Sunday school started in 1866. A "third service," much of the time, held once a fortnight. (25½.)

100. Population 75 to 80. Mostly American. Not vicious, but decidedly irreligious. Little, if any, respect for the Sabbath. (27½.)

101. Population 134. Mostly American. Two or three miles from church. A Sunday school started, two years ago, by two young ladies. Also, the past winter, a prayer meeting.

102. A Branch Sunday school recently started and superintended by a young lady, in the neighborhood of an ancient Puritan seat—the old mansion still standing and occupied by an Irish family. (51 *a*.)

103. Population 615. Irish and French. Under the eaves of the sanctuary. Every family visited, and Bibles and Testaments offered. Last spring, a Branch Sunday school commenced, with 40 scholars. Broken up by the priest. (55 *b*.)

104. Two school districts and part of a third. "Only two or three families connected with any religious society in which the Gospel is preached." A meeting established eight years ago, by members of a Congregational church. Attendance, 40 or 50, and sometimes more, and pretty uniform. Last summer (1866) a Universalist minister came, and the brethren withdrew. He soon left, and they resumed their meetings. Recently, Baptists from another town have commenced a similar meeting. The brethren have again withdrawn; but are ready to reenter the field, if vacant. (63.)

On the whole, the returns from the out-districts must be regarded as very encouraging. There has been a manifest advance during the year; and a similar progress for two years more would see nearly all these neighborhoods reached by some form of stated Christian effort. It would appear, however, that more than fifty localities still remain to be provided for, and the number may prove to be considerably larger than that. Indeed, if we include those in which the present instrumentalities are apparently inadequate, it would be much larger.

Important inquiries return upon us, from this survey of the State. Among them, scarcely any is more pressing than that which relates to the employment of

County Assistants.

This matter was treated, at some length, in the last Report; but it will not lie still. The four western counties, with portions of Worcester, Middlesex, Bristol and Plymouth Counties, present an amount of work, which it is utterly impossible for the pastors to perform, in addition to their regular and imperative duties, and of a kind quite removed from the limited sphere of ordinary lay effort. The example of Hampden County shows how much can be done in so short a time as three years, towards giving new life to churches, almost dead, and towards harmonizing discords, awakening activity, supplying waste places, and gathering souls into the kingdom of Heaven. The same work is *waiting* elsewhere; while in Hampden County itself, other work remains, not less important, equally difficult, and demanding the whole time of an able, discreet, skillful and devoted minister.

In the counties named, there are towns where there is no Congregational church, because opportunities have not been improved; villages of four hundred, five hundred, six hundred inhabitants, without any church, because neighboring pastors cannot spend the time necessary to *work up* a nucleus and organize a beginning; numerous out-districts neglected, because the attention of the churches has not been vigorously directed to

the facts, and to the responsibilities which the facts involve; and many feeble churches, whose pastors, weary and almost discouraged, would hail as a messenger sent from heaven, a ministerial brother of loving spirit and helpful tact, who should stand ready to join with them, for a week or fortnight, in holding meetings and visiting the people; and there are young ministers, not a few, with some, too, who are not very young, whose usefulness would be very largely increased by those few days of prayerful, earnest, determined labor. Everything would depend, of course, upon the man selected for this important post.

What then are the qualities required in the County Assistant? Those which go to make up a *pastor* of the highest order. But, it may be said, Such men are not to be had. To which we reply: If no mortal Gabriel and no modern Paul or John comes in our way, we will promptly take the best that Heaven sends, and be thankful; ekeing out with our prayers our brother's lack, as we try to, our own.

In this matter, moreover, the *name* is of substantial importance. Call this man "Assistant." Let him feel that he is set apart to be a *helper* to the pastors and churches — not to do an independent work, but to wait upon their call, succor their need, and make up, in part, their lack.

And this, again, indicates the mode in which the labors of such a brother should be directed. The brethren of Hampden County unquestionably acted wisely, in giving to their Assistant a Committee, whose counsels should aid him in the direction of his labors.

But another point comes to view — the question of support. Shall we contravene the ancient usage of our churches, by formally associating them in their church capacity, for the business of raising and disbursing money? There is no necessity for this. In connection with many of our Conferences, perhaps with most, there is already in existence a "Benevolent Society." This Society usually embraces, indeed, very much the same individuals as the Conference; but it is differently organized, and it *does not control or commit the churches*, in their organic capacity, by its action. This Society is the proper body for raising the funds.

But again, the question is asked: Shall a special contribution be requested of the churches, for this object, and another be added to the list of their public charities, already too long? In Hampden County, a considerable portion of the money required is furnished by a fund, bequeathed in trust to the Committee of the South Congregational Church, Springfield, to be used, at its discretion, for the religious benefit of the county. There are wise men in other parts of the State, who might like to be their own executors, for the same end. In Franklin County, the money is raised by a special, private contribution, in great part from men of property. And have we not such men in all our counties — Christian men who delight to give to the Lord; patriotic citizens, who rejoice in all measures for public improvement, and who have the good sense to see that the whole county, with all that it contains, will be better and more valuable for the labors of a judicious and effective "County Assistant."

The whole case is in a nutshell. We are confronted with certain facts. These facts demand an amount and kind of work that the present laborers

cannot furnish. We must, then, give them a helper, or leave the work undone. But we have taken in hand anew the purpose of our fathers—to have, here in Massachusetts, a thoroughly Christian people. Deliberately to leave the work undone, would be to stultify ourselves; and, what is of far greater moment than that, to be unfaithful to our neighbor and to our Lord.

This matter is of such importance, that it seems to your Committee proper that the Conference should take some action in regard to it; and to this end, they respectfully suggest the appointment of a special Committee, to propose such action as may seem to them appropriate.

Neighborhood Conferences.

Another point which the experience of the past year brings prominently to view is, the usefulness of little *Neighborhood Conferences of Churches*. In Hampden, Franklin, Plymouth and Barnstable Counties, these meetings have been attended with excellent results. They have some very obvious recommendations. They are easily held, and with little expense of time. They make the churches acquainted, cherish their mutual love, encourage the faint hearted, spur up the sluggish, and enable all to share in the blessings of those who have been most highly favored in divine things. Our churches thoroughly believe in the communion of saints, and they have it here.

Such Neighborhood Conferences are especially useful in those parts of the State where, for any reason, the tone of the churches is feeble, where they are greatly overtasked, as in districts depleted by emigration, where Unitarianism, Universalism or Spiritism abound, or where an intrusive Anglicanism is seeking to alienate the affections of the people, to work off valuable families or young persons of promise, and lay its foundations of schism, of torpor and obstruction.

Continuous Preaching.

Still another point has been raised in Conferences occupying regions of the kind just described: — Whether, when the pastors and members of neighboring churches thus meet, they may not wisely, at times, continue their meeting for several days — with preaching? Certain it is, that in some way the truth must be kept in view of the people for extended seasons, or in many of our communities its progress (humanly speaking) must be very slow. When minds have sunk into a chronic indifference or bitterness, powerful alteratives and penetrating excitants must be used, and must be continued, or no favorable reaction is obtained. If at such times, new aspects of divine truth can be presented; if some doctrine that has long been forgotten can be preached with vital force, we may hope for good results. It is not necessary that we should copy the "four days' meeting" of forty years ago, or that our sermons should tread the round of topics that was followed then. Indeed, it could hardly be said that we "rightly divide" the word of truth, if we preach only a part of it, or ever

in the same order. Brethren would feel quite at liberty to take up, on such occasions, any neglected fragment of the Gospel.

An Important Question.

This brings to mind the grand lesson of our present experience. The churches of the State are not putting forth one half of their power. *Why not?*

It is always the case when churches are cold, that some important truth has not been duly preached. Scurvy curses the crews that have long been fed on a certain partial diet; and ophthalmia, others. New life and eyesight return when the lacking elements are supplied. If any of our churches are now nerveless or blind, it must be because some portion of that divine whole which God has appointed for their spiritual nourishment has not been adequately supplied. The revivals of a generation ago came in connection with the faithful preaching of the long forgotten doctrine of the sinner's individual responsibility. Perhaps now, if ministers could preach with equal fervor the true doctrine of the Christian's individual responsibility, we might have a new revival, more mighty and enduring than any — and more beautiful. If we could plainly show what the divine life of the soul really is, and what and who the Christian is; if we could clearly set forth the relations into which this new life brings believers, members as they are of God's household, brethren and friends of Christ; if we could lift up their eyes to behold *Christ the King*, the real, ever present head of the church and of every one of its members, and could unveil the interior of his household — its joys, its dignity, its privileges, its duties; if we can preach these things from our pulpits, by wayside and fireside, as our fathers preached those other neglected truths, in their day, why may not we expect similar triumphs in the line of our doctrine? They made sinners feel their personal accountability. Is it impossible to fill believers with an overpowering sense of their privilege?

But our preaching of this truth in words would not be enough. It will not answer, to say that the Church is a divine brotherhood; we must make it one.

Here, then, is the question. *How can we knit the members of our churches together in the love which is truly divine?* It would seem to be clear that if believers are to be thus knit together, they must come together, under circumstances suited to call forth and cherish this love. Our prayer meetings, especially those of a more confidential nature, are plainly indispensable, and ought to be attended by all church members. If pressed for an answer to our question, we should say, therefore, that our churches must take more pains to bring their members together *in little circles*, for conversation upon the Bible and for prayer and praise. The "Neighborhood Meeting," already familiar and precious, should be shaped to the purpose of making Christians acquainted, as Christians, and giving them foretastes of the joy of Christ's household; and such meetings, varying in form at different times, and planned to include all church members, should be held for a part of every year, in all churches. If to these were added those

larger gatherings known as "Fellowship" or "Covenant Meetings"— and which, again, vary in form at different times, being sometimes wholly devotional, at others largely social in their character — there would be furnished, perhaps, all the additional methods that the circumstances allow.

We respectfully suggest that this matter be referred to a special Committee of the General Conference, to propose such action as may commend itself to their judgment.

In conclusion, your Committee desire to remind themselves and their brethren of the one end of our labor — *the complete and thorough Christianization of the people.* In this aim all other purposes should be lost; and by it, should all measures be judged. More than rational, it is the proper standard of reasonableness.

We by no means forget that other churches than those called by our particular name, must take part in this work, and that secular agencies must unite with the churches for its accomplishment; that schools, laws, and literature, must all bear a Christian tone, and be, indirectly, furthering the Christian aim, or it cannot be thoroughly accomplished. These all are mighty activities, that reach to the depths of souls and modify character. But neither do we forget, that in the midst of all these institutions and powers, stands *the Church*, central and commanding; and that if we do our work thoroughly there, it is wrought for the circumference as well as the centre. Nor, again, is there any danger that those other churches will not follow ours, if ours lead in the ways of Christ, or that we shall neglect to press hard after them, if grace is given them to surpass us.

There is one thing, then, for us to do: forsaking all else, to throw ourselves with all our might, into *the work of the churches*; believing with our whole souls in *Christ the King*, and that unto Him is given "dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him."

By vote of the State Committee,

DANIEL P. NOYES,

September 11, 1867. *Sec. Home Evangelization.*

APPENDIX.

STATE COMMITTEE ON HOME EVANGELIZATION.

CHAIRMAN.

HON. WILLIAM B. WASHBURNE, of Greenfield.

VICE-CHAIRMAN.

REV. EDWIN B. WEBB, D D., of Boston.

SECRETARY.

REV. DANIEL P. NOYES, of Boston.

RECORDING SECRETARY.

REV. REUBEN T. ROBINSON, of Winchester.

MEMBERS.

Andover Conference,	Rev. CALEB E. FISHER, *ex officio.*
Barnstable "	Rev. JOSEPH B. CLARK, "
" "	Capt. NATHANIEL DOANE.
Berkshire South Conference.	Rev. NATH'L H. EGGLESTON, *ex officio.*
" " "	Rev. NAHUM GALE, D. D.
Brookfield "	Rev. A. E. P. PERKINS.
Essex North "	Rev. SAMUEL J. SPALDING, D. D., *ex officio.*
Essex South "	Rev. JAMES M. WHITON. "
" "	Dea. JACOB PERLEY.
Franklin "	Rev. CHARLES LORD, *ex officio.*
" "	Hon. WILLIAM B. WASHBURNE.
Hampden "	Rev. JOHN W. HARDING.
" "	Hon. THOMAS CARTER.
Hampshire East Conference,	Rev. ——— ———, *ex officio.*
Mendon "	Rev. JACOB ROBERTS, "
Middlesex South "	Rev. EDMUND DOWSE, "
" " "	Rev. HENRY BULLARD.
Middlesex Union "	Rev. EDWIN R. HODGMAN, *ex officio.*
" " "	Dea. JOHN PROCTOR.

Norfolk	Conference,	Rev. Stephen H. Hayes, *ex officio.*
Old Colony	"	Rev. Isaac Dunham, "
Pilgrim	"	Rev. David Bremner, "
"	"	Rev. Ebenezer Alden, Jr.
Suffolk North	"	Rev. David T. Packard, *ex officio.*
Suffolk South	"	Rev. Edwin B. Webb, D. D., "
"	"	J. Russell Bradford, Esq.
Taunton	"	Rev. William H. Adams, *ex officio.*
Woburn	"	Rev. Reuben T. Robinson, "
"	"	Rev. William H. Willcox.
Worcester Central	"	Rev. Amos H. Coolidge, *ex officio.*
" "	"	Rev. William Houghton, "
Worcester North	"	Rev. Lewis Sabin, D. D.
General	"	Rev. Joshua W. Wellman, *ex officio.*
"	"	Rev. Alonzo H. Quint, D. D. "
"	"	Rev. William Barrows.
"	"	Rev. Henry M. Dexter, D. D.
"	"	Rev. James T. McCollom.
"	"	Dea. William Thurston.
"	"	Marshall S. Scudder, Esq.

MEMBERS AT LARGE.

"	"	Rev. Edmund K. Alden, D. D.
"	"	Rev. George N. Anthony.
"	"	Rev. Mortimer Blake.
"	"	Mr. James G. Buttrick.
"	"	Hon. Reuben A. Chapman.
"	"	Hon. S. Angier Chase.
"	"	Hon. Allen W. Dodge.
"	"	Mr. Arthur Gilman.
"	"	Hon. Alfred Hitchcock.
"	"	Rev. Albert H. Plumb.
"	"	Mr. Joseph S. Ropes.
"	"	Mr. Ichabod Washburn.
"	"	Mr. David Whitcomb.

REPORT OF THE CHURCHES IN THE PILGRIM CONFERENCE.

NAMES OF CHURCHES.	CONGREGATIONAL.																		
	Parish.	Congregation.		Church.			Neglecters.				Fair-day audience.	Per cent of congregation.	Children between 5 and 15.	Do. religiously taught.	Do. not so taught.	Children of church members.	Do. baptized.	Not baptized.	Household baptisms in the year.
	Population.†	Congregation.	Per cent on population.	Communicants.	Per cent on population.	Per cent on congregation.	Nominally in congregation.	Wholly unconnected.	Total of both.	Per cent on population.									
Carver, North	450	340	.76	73	.16	.22	.....	.....	110	.25	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Halifax	625	450	.72	46	.07	.10	.....	.....	175	.28	250	.57	102	82	20	25	12	13	1
Hanover, First	600	220	.37	42	.07	.20	150	100	250	.40	100	.50	125	100	25	13	9	4	1
Hanover, Second	723	130	.18	53	.07	.24	.....	78	.....	.....	100	.80	.....	.....	.....	19	15	4	1
Hanson	1,195	237	.20	36	.03	.15	180	340	520	.43	140	.59	50	40	10	6	....	6	....
Kingston	1,626	240	.15	61	.04	.25	.....	.....	676	.42	130	.54	60	60	....	45	10	35	....
Marshfield, First	900	400	.45	35	.06	.09	183	119	202	.22	140	.35	80	40	40	33	16	17	1
Marshfield, Second	620	153	.28	41	.07	.27	.....	.....	127	.20	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Plymouth, Third	.....	690	.....	200	....	.29	.....	.....	.....	....	350	.50	.....	.....	....	70	30	40	4
Plymouth, Fourth	725	300	40	115	.16	.38	155	140	295	.41	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Plymouth, Fifth											150	.60	50	30	20	20	....	20	....
Plympton	850	580	.68	90	.10	.15	95	175	270	.32	200	.34	140	106	34	40	7	33	2
Scituate	2,269	225	.10	82	.03	.36	.....	.....	616	.27	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Duxbury*	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Pembroke*	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
South Scituate*	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

* No Congregational (Orthodox) church.

† Including all denominations.

Names of Churches and Congregations.	Congregational.											
	Parish.	Congregation.		Church.			Neglecters.				Fair-day audience.	Per cent on congregation.
	Population.	Congregation.	Per cent on population.	Communicants.	Per cent on population.	Per cent on congregation.	Nominally in congregation.	Wholly unconnected.	Total of both.	Per cent on population.		
Amherst, North	.....	456	.....	170	.....	.38	.....	.....	18	.....	304	.66
Attleboro'	2,000	650	.33	180	.09	.28	.....	305	305	.15	350	.53
Berlin	1,065	595	.56	143	.13	.24	.....	.....	365	.34	365	.61
Buckland	304	275	.90	105	.34	.38	18	16	34	.11	170	.62
Hadley	290*	270	.93	98	.34	.36	3	8	11	.04	130	.48
Montague	1,500	605	.40	150	.10	.25	326	.....	.....	.22	300	.50
Prescott	100	85	.85	34	.34	.40	3	12	15	.15	.....	.....
Sheffield	2,000	400	.20	175	.09	.44	100	400	500	.25	.....	.....
Shelburne Falls	2,000	386	.20	145	.07	.37	.....	.....	600	.30	224	.58
Sunderland	823	575	.69	260	.32	.45	14	27	41*	.05	375	.65
Whately	1,012	353	.35	136	.13	.39	.....	.....	.....	.....	250	.71

* Native.

WORCESTER CENTRAL CONFERENCE, (IN PART.)

CHURCHES.	Population.	Attendants.	Non attendants.	At Congregational church.	Per cent attendant.	Per cent non attendant.	Foreign population.
Berlin	1,065	595	470	500	.56	.44	56
Boylston	792	400	392	300	.51	.49	50
Clinton	4,021	3,200	821	600	.79	.21	500
Holden	1,846	1,384	462	800	.75	.25	.....
Leicester	2,528	1,978	530	.....	.78	.22	.....
Oxford	2,713	1,980	733	600	.73	.27	450
Paxton	626	427	199	398	.68	.32	42
Rutland	1,011	775	236	725	.76	.24	111
Shrewsbury	1,571	1,153	418	541	.74	.26	306
West Boylston	2,293	1,840	453	374	.80	.20	841

HAMPSHIRE EAST CONFERENCE.

CHURCHES.	Number of families.	Number of families attendant.	Number of families non-attendant.	Number of persons between 5 and 21.	Sunday school scholars.	Adults in Sunday school.	Sunday school teachers.
Amherst, First	170	132	38	240	226	54	26
Amherst, Second	122	100	22	130	164	60	20
Amherst, College	20	20	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Amherst, North	158	126	32	191	190	60	22
Amherst, South	90	76	14	139	160	50	16
Belchertown	300	200	100	250	358	160	25
Enfield	124	110	14	126	223	74	24
Granby	184	126	58	220	197	50	17
Greenwich	112	65	47	121	160	57	15
Hadley, First	123	107	16	160	185	82	22
Hadley, Second	105	96	9	160	175	50	14
Hadley, Russell	69	59	10	76	70	18	10
Hatfield	163	141	22	183	231	35	21
Leverett	97	40	57	99	150	65	14
Pelham	63	37	26	65	50	25	9
Prescott	32	23	9	49	85	30	10
South Hadley, First	188	150	38	220	204	55	27
South Hadley Falls	110	110	.....	.....	155	37	18
Whately	80	70	10	100	160	60	20
Total	2,310	1,788	522	2,529	3,143	922	330

GAINS OF THE CHURCHES.

COUNTIES.	Number of churches.	Number of resident members.	Added on profession of faith.	Removed by death or excommunicated.	Gain.	Average for each church.	Added by letter.	Received by letter.	Gain.	Loss.	Average for each church.	Gain on the whole.	Loss on the whole.	Average for each church.
Barnstable	21	1,855	225	26	199	9.48	55	21	34	....	1.62+	233	....	11.10
Berkshire	33	3,905	323	72	251	7.61	118	171	.....	53	1.61—	198	....	6.00
Bristol	26	3,115	189	67	122	4.69	65	59	6	....	0.23+	128	....	4.92
Dukes	3	180	20	4	16	5.34	3	5	.....	2	0.66—	14	....	4.67
Essex	66	9,516	568	185	383	5.80	266	238	28	....	0.42+	411	....	6.23
Franklin	30	2,749	233	61	172	5.73	104	93	11	....	0.37+	183	...	6.10
Hampden	36	4,291	170	94	76	2.12	178	220	.....	42	1.16—	34	....	0.94
Hampshire	39	6,089	259	123	136	3.49	232	173	59	....	1.51+	195	....	5.00
Middlesex	72	10,935	825	217	608	8.45	482	358	124	....	1.72+	732	....	10.17
Nantucket	1	204	9	9	.....	.....	2	5	.....	3	3.00—	.....	3	3.00
Norfolk	45	4,915	442	104	338	7.51	181	124	57	....	1.27+	395	....	8.78
Plymouth	34	3,477	275	90	185	5.44	64	70	.....	6	0.14—	179	....	5.26
Suffolk	17	5,237	414	64	350	20.59	262	188	74	....	4.35+	424	....	24.94
Worcester	73	10,171	692	218	474	6.49	304	326	.....	22	0.30—	452	....	6.19
Total, 1866	496	66,139*	4,644	1,334	3,310	6.67	2,316	2,051	265	....	0.53+	3,575	....	7.21
Total, 1865	493	63,808	2,153	1,305	848	1.7	1,696	1,703	.....	7	.014	841	....	1.7

* Incorrectly given last year.

SUGGESTIONS

TO THE CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES ON HOME EVANGELIZATION IN THE LOCAL CONFERENCES.

Adopted by the State Committee, September 11, 1867.

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1. The Chairman of each Committee is desired to keep himself informed respecting the *Out-districts* within the bounds of the Conference, to know how far they are cared for, and to do what he can to incite the churches to fidelity in regard to them.

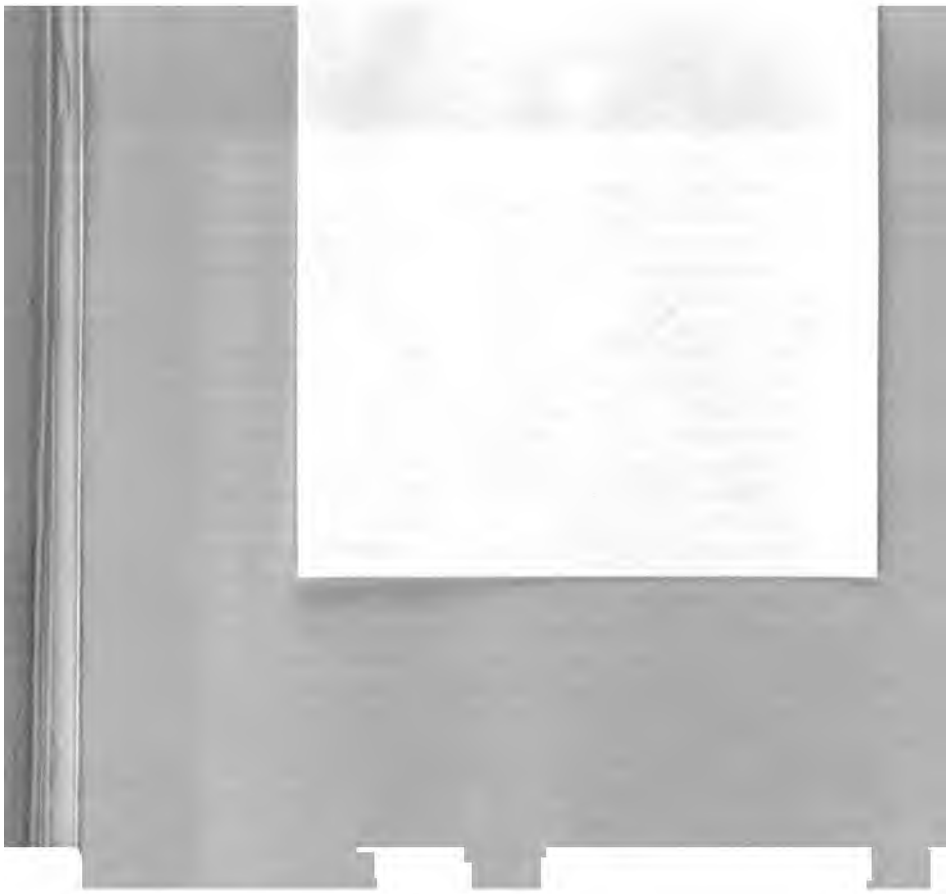
2. To keep himself informed respecting the various *classes of Neglecters* within the bounds of the Conference, and to agitate, in various ways and on all proper occasions, the question, What can be done to reach them? In short,

3. To use every possible endeavor to *awaken interest* in the whole matter, to keep this interest alive, and to bring it constantly to a head, in a wise activity.

4. To gather returns of the *Work of the Churches.*

5. To embody these returns in an interesting, instructive and stimulating *Report on the Work of the Churches*, to the Conference; and to furnish the same report to the State Secretary.

It was further *Resolved*: That expenses incurred by Chairmen of the Local Committees in performing the services above mentioned, be reported to the State Secretary, and charged by him with his own.



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GENERAL Conference of
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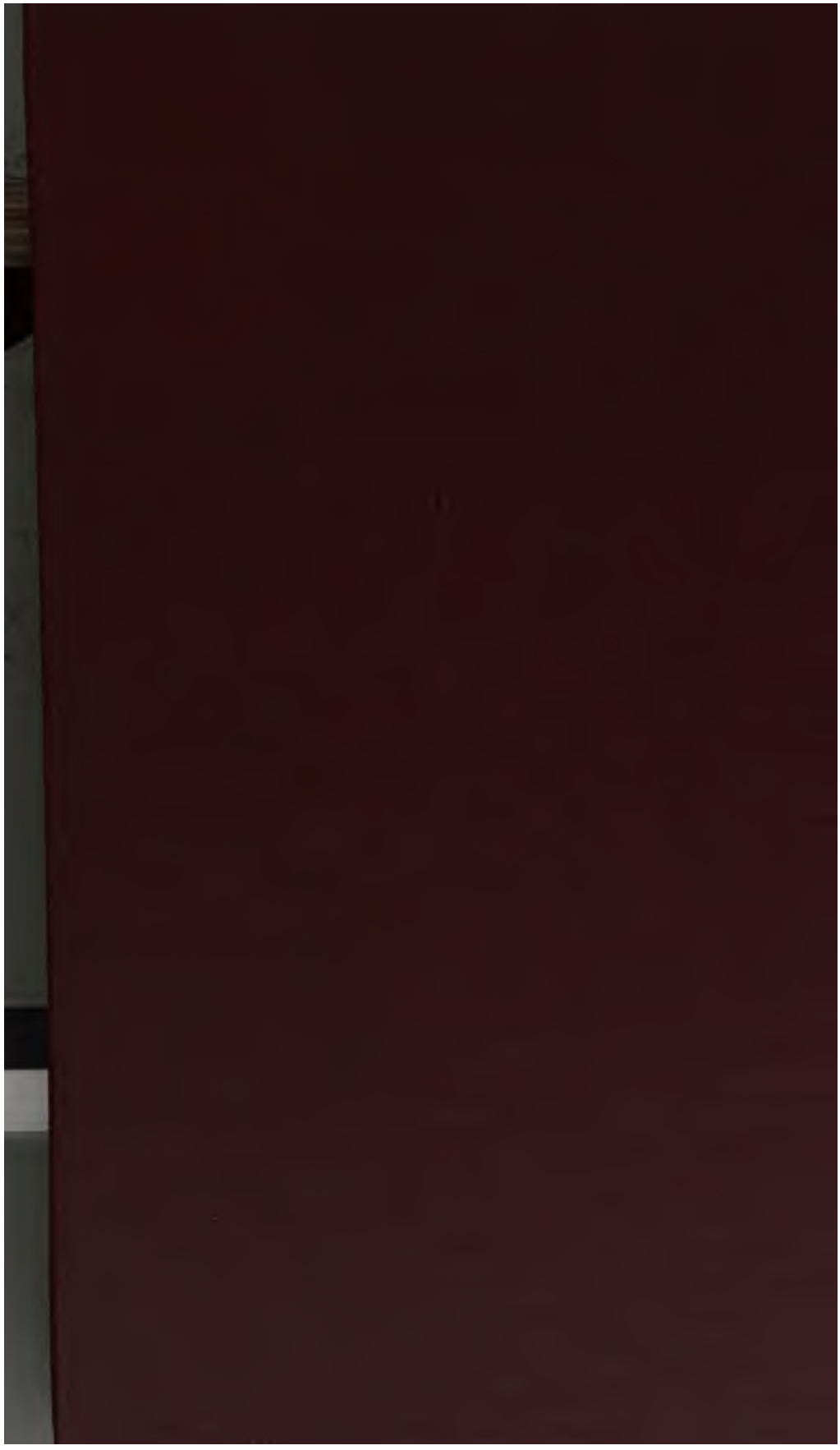
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